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ON COMMAND: AN ILLUSTRATIVE STUDY OF COMMAND AND CONTROL
IN THE ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA, 1863

by

Charles W. Sanders, Jr.

LTC, USA



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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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PREFACE

The mission of the military professional is the orderly application of force in support of national goals. These policy goals are translated into military strategy from which are drawn strategic aims, those broad military objectives the nation tasks its armed forces with accomplishing in war. These aims the military professional will gain through the application of operational art, the employment of military forces to attain strategic goals through the design and execution of campaigns.

Campaigns are the "what" of operational art, as they translate strategic guidance into operational direction on the battlefield. But equally important in the application of operational art is the "how," the system to be employed to ensure operational direction is passed to subordinates in a manner that is both efficient and effective and leads to the accomplishment of the campaign aim.

The "how" of operational art is the command and control system. Through this system the commander assigns missions, operational areas, and allocates the resources required to secure the campaign aims. It is also through this system that the commander must express his concept of the operations facing his forces and manage the internal organization and personal relationships within his command during those operations.

The successful application of an effective command and control system is absolutely key if the commander is to attain his campaign objectives. This paper, through the use of historical example, examines the command and control system of the Army of Northern Virginia during the Chancellorsville and Gettysburg campaigns. These campaigns were chosen because they are rich in examples of both effective command and control and situations in which the system failed completely.

The campaigns are examined in some detail, for it is only through close examination of the people and events of a time that we may draw truly applicable lessons from past experiences. The paper provides views of many of the key players in these campaigns, but it centers on one man, Robert E. Lee. It is in Lee's application of command and control during the summer of 1863 that we find, at once, a system capable of providing his nation with its greatest victory and its most crippling defeat.

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** Maps 1-3 are from Craig L. Symonds, A Battlefield Atlas of The Civil War, (Baltimore: Nauticaland Aviation Publishing Company, 1983).

Maps 4-11 are from Edwin B. Coddington, The Gettysburg Campaign (New York: Scribners, 1968).

THE LESSON

"Precisely two years had passed since Lee had taken the decisive step in mobilizing the Virginia volunteers. Two years of desperate contest, lacking one month, lay ahead of him. He was midway through his military career as a Confederate commander when Jackson died. Much had he learned.... In the hard school of combat he had mastered the art of the offensive so fully, both in strategy and in tactics, that little seemed left for him to acquire. But his military education was not yet completed. On a hill near a little town in Pennsylvania, the bell of a quiet seminary was calling him again to school to learn a new lesson, written in blood."

Douglas S. Freeman
R.E. Lee, A Biography

ON COMMAND: AN ILLUSTRATIVE STUDY OF COMMAND AND CONTROL
IN THE ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA, 1863

I. INTRODUCTION

The old man was tired. As he sat, slumped on his horse by the side of the road, the rain that had been falling gently all day began to come down in torrents. He was soon soaked through, but he seemed not to notice. His attention was riveted on the ghastly scene being played out in front of him. There, on the narrow road, the flashes of lightning in the pitch black of the night revealed long lines of gaunt soldiers and creaking wagons, all moving south. This was the column of the wounded. Some walked with the help of friends. Some staggered along alone, their bandages now filthy with mud and soaked by the rain. Those who could not walk rode in the wagons. These were the amputees, the head and abdominal wounds, and the blinded. Some screamed in pain as the wagons jolted along, others bore their misery in stoic silence. Some would die before morning. Some were dead already.

All this the old man watched in silence, thinking that this place must be the most terrible on earth, and this day the most horrible he had ever known. The old man was General Robert E. Lee. The day was the Fourth of July, 1863. The place was Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

How is it that Lee, the great and revered commander of the fabled Army of Northern Virginia, came to that awful moment on the side of the Chambersburg Pike so far from home? Only two weeks before, his command had crossed the Potomac heading north, an awesome invading force at the peak of its fighting power. Colonel Risdin T. Bennet, whose 14th North Carolina served as the spearhead of the Army, had looked with pride on his confident veterans as they waded the river. The Southerners were, he reckoned, "as tough and efficient as any army of the same number ever marshalled on this planet."¹ This was an army of fighters, tested and proven. They were good, and they knew it. General Henry Heth, a division commander in the Third Corps, sensed their confidence as the invasion began. "There was not an officer or soldier in the Army of Northern Virginia," Heth recalled, "from General Lee to the drummer boy, who did not believe ...that it was able to drive the Federal Army into the Atlantic Ocean."²

Yet, it was Lee's army which would be driven. The confident Southerners would find only defeat and death across the river. What went wrong? The soldiers were superb and morale was at its highest. They were adequately equipped, well trained, and eager for a decisive victory on northern soil. How was such an army defeated?

In large measure, the defeat of the Army of Northern Virginia in the Gettysburg campaign can be attributed to a failure in leadership at the highest echelons of command. For while it was true that the Army that marched north in the summer of 1863 was at its peak tactically, it suffered a grave deficiency operationally--a deficiency in senior leadership too serious to be put right by the hard fighting and incredible bravery of the individual Southern soldier. In the hills of Pennsylvania, at the instant when his men would need him most, Robert E. Lee would fail them. The Army of Northern Virginia would fight its greatest battle without effective command or control.

II. COMMAND AND CONTROL DOCTRINE

Joint Chiefs of Staff Publication 1 defines command and control as "the exercise of authority and direction...by a commander over assigned forces in the accomplishment of his mission."³ Although often treated as a single entity, "command" and "control" are two very different processes. Command is the process by which a commander passes his will and intent to his subordinates. It is directive in nature. Control, however, is a regulatory process by which the commander insures his will and intent are followed.⁴ One without the other is ineffective, and the commander who does

not possess effective command and control over his forces in fact "commands" nothing. The forces will operate as independent entities, and the operational plan will suffer.

Definitive command and control doctrine is a relatively new development in the U.S. Army. Its rise in importance has been occasioned by the added emphasis the Army now places on the operational level of war, an emphasis begun only with the 1982 version of the Army's keystone war fighting manual, FM 100-5.⁵ Previous editions of FM 100-5 failed to even address the operational level of war, emphasizing only the winning of battles, not how these victories might be coordinated so as to win wars in the process.⁶ Beginning in 1982 the Army, in its AirLand Battle doctrine, focused on the operational level of war as the key to successful war-fighting efforts. Along with this focus came renewed emphasis on command and control. The new doctrine recognizes effective command and control as an absolute "necessity" if AirLand Battle is to be conducted properly. It mandates a command and control system that is "mission-oriented" and facilitates operational freedom, the delegation of authority, and effective leadership at critical points on the battlefield.⁷

Key to the implementation of such a system is use of "mission-type orders," orders in which the commander specifies to his subordinates what must be done without detailing how the mission is to be accomplished. The "how" is left to the

subordinate. This much of the mission-oriented command and control system is generally understood and embraced by leaders at all echelons as permitting them the maximum exercise of initiative on the battlefield.

Unfortunately, our instruction in effective command and control often stops right there. Leaders hear of, and furiously clamor for "freedom of initiative" on the battlefield, firmly believing that in issuing and receiving orders which allow the maximum degree of freedom of action they have satisfied the imperatives of effective command and control. This view of mission-type orders, however, is only half right. All great freedoms carry with them great responsibilities, and the great responsibility for the commander who wishes to operate under mission-type orders is that he communicate his vision--the conditions he wishes to obtain as a result of his campaign--to his subordinates. This vision must provide his forces with a common, clearly understood final objective. It is against the attainment of this objective that all activities and actions of the campaign must be evaluated. The commander must then be able to communicate this vision to his subordinates as his "intent," or his vision of the end conditions of the campaign, why those conditions must be achieved, and the broad actions the force will take to achieve them.⁸ It is this "commander's intent" which provides the bounds within which subordinates have the

latitude to exercise initiative in the accomplishment of their individual missions.

Many of our ideas in the mission-order area have been gained from a study of the command and control system developed through the years by the German Army. While this study has been useful, it has unfortunately also been imperfect and superficial. Leaders at all levels are lectured today on the virtues of the "German" concept of Auftragstaktik, or "mission-type orders." In fact, this word has no meaning when applied in this context.⁹ German orders were not some vaguely worded directives keyed on maximizing subordinate freedom of action, as often taught today. They were, rather, precise mission statements constructed around the commander's intent (Absicht). From this intent, the commander assigned tasks (Auftrage) to be accomplished by subordinates. The primary German field manual of World War II, Truppenfuhrung, allowed subordinate commanders the freedom to change or even abandon specific tasks, as long as such actions remained within the bounds of the commander's intent.¹⁰ Intent was so critical to the success of operations that General Hans von Seeckt, commander of the Reichswehr, demanded the operational commander be able to "force his will so vigorously that its pulsation will be perceptible in their uttermost ramifications." He reminded his commanders that "the will of

Frederick and Napoleon was a living force in the humblest grenadier."¹¹

Effective command and control, then, is composed of ingredients which must be present in just the correct amount. Operational freedom must be bounded by commander's intent, and the two must focus on the single objective of mission accomplishment.

There is one final ingredient in effective command and control which must be considered--command relationships. The relationship a commander has with his subordinates is very personal, and is decided in large degree by the personality of the commander and the abilities and personalities of his subordinates.¹² The performance of an army is significantly affected by not only the decisions a commander makes concerning the operations the army will undertake, but also by the manner in which the commander imparts those operational decisions to his subordinate commanders. The manner employed is, in large part, determined by the command relationship he has with his subordinates. A key element in determining what sort of relationship will exist in a command is the trust and confidence the commander places in the abilities of his subordinate leaders to understand and accomplish his intent in battle. The commander should, of course, modify command relationships as his subordinate commanders or their abilities change.¹³

History provides numerous examples of instances in which the application of command and control was pivotal in the final outcome of a campaign. Few examples, however, are as stark in contrast or as critical in result as those provided by the Chancellorsville and Gettysburg campaigns of the Army of Northern Virginia. An examination of those campaigns of 1863 reveals not only the importance of an effective system of command and control in battle, but how even subtle changes in that system can transform the fortunes of an Army from stunning victory to crushing defeat.

LEE'S COMMAND STYLE

Any study of operational level command and control in the Army of Northern Virginia must begin with an examination of the command style of Robert E. Lee. Much can be discerned of Lee's views concerning command and control by examining the manner in which he related to his subordinate commanders and his staff. If Lee's manner had to be described in a single word, that word would be "personal." He knew the personal and fighting characteristics of every brigade, division, and corps commander in his army. In an army always outnumbered and bereft of operational reserves, he had to know the combat power of each unit. Whenever notified that a unit was in a particularly tight spot, his first question would likely be, "Who commands that brigade?"¹⁴ He knew which of his units

might require early relief from combat and which could bear the strain of sustained battle.¹⁵ This is not to say that Lee was a personable commander. He was always impersonal and formal in his relationships with his subordinates and his staff, a trait displayed in the manner in which he preferred to issue orders. Lee, a very courtly man, was often uncomfortable issuing direct orders to his subordinate commanders, preferring instead the use of "discretionary orders" in which he would provide subordinates possible operational alternatives to battlefield situations, always leaving the final decision with the commander on the spot.¹⁶

These discretionary orders are a form of mission order which, as discussed earlier, are an effective means of command if the commander has made clear his intent to his subordinates. It is his intent--his view of the operation--that will serve as his subordinates' guide in decision making. As we shall see in our study, Lee did not always succeed in imparting clear intent to his commanders.

This shortcoming could have been remedied by an active, insightful staff assuring the wishes of the commander were known and obeyed, but Lee did not employ his staff in this manner. Lee's staff, remarkably small by the standards of the day, was extremely austere in both facilities and mission. His entire headquarters was contained in seven or eight pole tents pitched usually in close proximity to one of the corps

headquarters.¹⁷ This Spartan arrangement was not without cost. With few men and rustic facilities, the amount and quality of work the staff could accomplish for Lee was always small. This arrangement was further complicated by the fact that Lee usually served as his own chief of staff.¹⁸ He rarely issued written orders, and when he did he often wrote them himself, using the staff only to make copies. This further reduced the time he might have spent controlling actions at a decisive point. Further, because he served as his own best staff officer, thus lengthening his already grueling days, he was often exhausted and diminished in his command capacities.¹⁹

A final comment on the command style of Lee concerns his command relationship with his subordinates. As discussed earlier, the relationship between a commander and his subordinates is very personal and based, in large degree, on the level of trust and confidence the commander places in the abilities of his individual lieutenants. This level of trust and confidence should, of course, be modified by the commander should his subordinates or their demonstrated abilities change. This was an equation Lee got only half right, and the result in the Army of Northern Virginia was, as we shall see, a diminished degree of command and control.

THE CHANCELLORSVILLE CAMPAIGN: APRIL-MAY 1863

THE OPENING MOVES

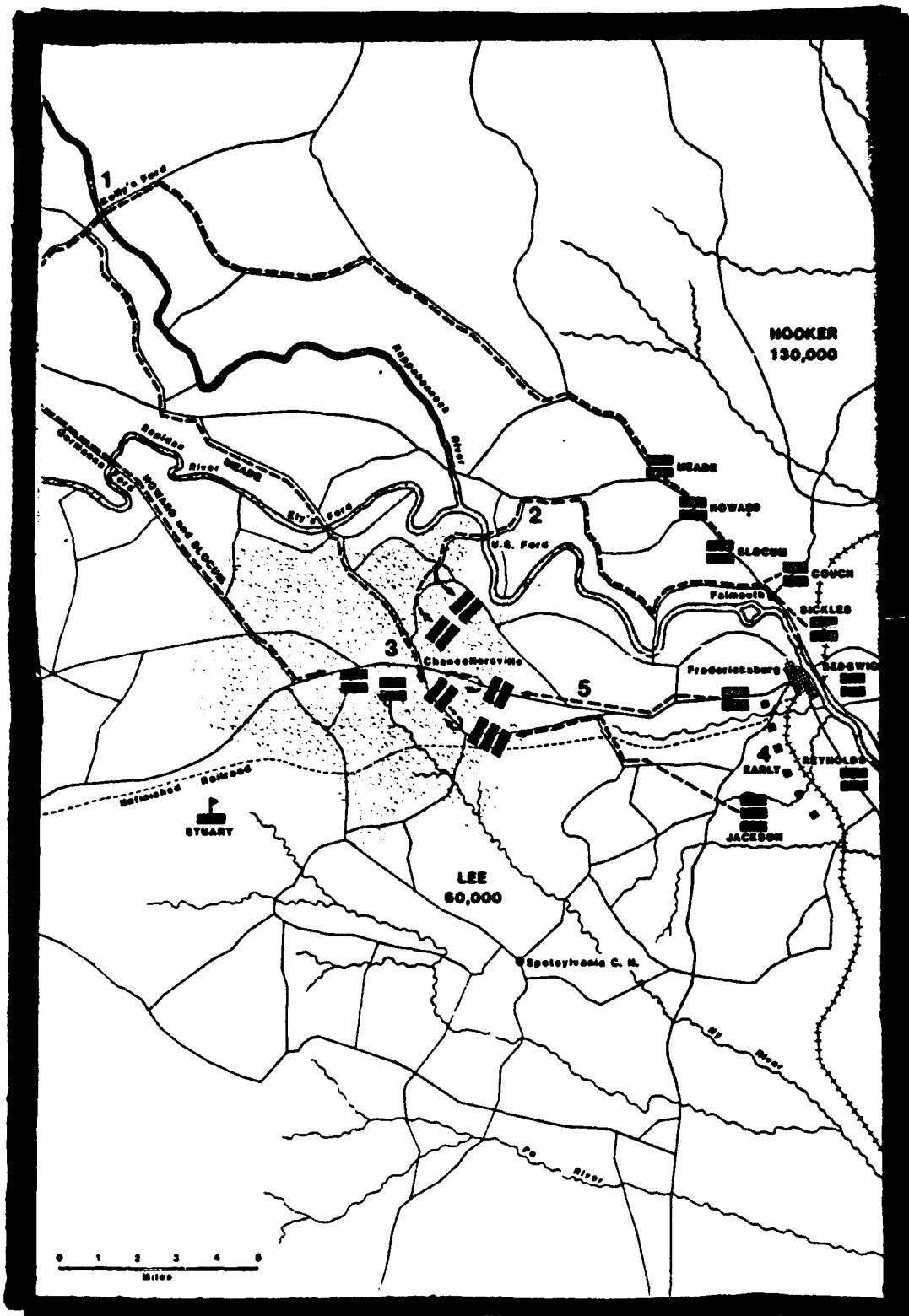
Command and control was a subject much on the mind of Robert E. Lee in May of 1863. Five months had passed since he had crushed the blubbering Burnside at Fredericksburg, dealing him a loss of 12,653 men while losing only a third of that number himself.²⁰ So thoroughly defeated was the hapless Army of the Potomac that the two armies spent the rest of the winter warily watching each other across the Rappahannock. Following that victory Lee had been forced by President Jefferson Davis to detach most of the 1st Corps of his Army for independent operations in southern Virginia.²¹ This weakening of the Army by almost one third had posed no problem as long as the Federal forces ("Those People," as Lee always referred to his Union opponents) had remained inactive, but Lee sensed that the coming of spring would also bring renewed activity from the Yankee host encamped on the northern side of the river--a host now led by the blustering "Fighting Joe" Hooker.²²

Lincoln was still looking for the general who could "face the arithmetic" of the slaughter which would be required if the rebellion was ever to be ended.²³ The amiable but inept Burnside had been given a final chance and, following the infamous "mud march" of January, had asked to be relieved.

Lincoln had obliged.²⁴ Hooker, touted as the most handsome commander in the Union Army and never a man to underestimate his own abilities, made it plain that he was "...no Burnside" and that the days of Lee's dominance of the field were numbered. "I have the finest Army the sun ever shone on," he boasted. "My plans are perfect, and when I start to carry them out, may God have mercy on General Lee, for I shall have none!"²⁵

Big words indeed, but Lee knew that behind all the bluster was a considerable amount of truth. Since his appointment as commander of the Army in January, Hooker had worked hard to raise morale and improve discipline. His efforts had paid off and the Army of the Potomac, like the phoenix of myth, had risen yet again. "Under Hooker," one soldier put it simply, "we began to live."²⁶ Lee watched the relentless drilling across the river, and waited for the fight he knew was coming. He did not have to wait long.

Just after daybreak on the morning of 29 April Lee was awakened by a staff officer who bore ominous news. Under cover of a heavy fog, Federal troops were crossing the Rappahannock south of Fredericksburg in great numbers (see map 1). This report was followed quickly by an even more serious dispatch from the cavalry pickets of General Jeb Stuart. Before dawn a huge force of Federal infantry had moved twenty-five miles to the northwest, crossed the river, and was now advancing south



Map 1

toward Lee's northern flank. The Army of Northern Virginia was about to be crushed between Hooker's massive pincers.²⁷

This could have been a difficult position indeed. Lee, with a large portion of his army missing, was faced by two converging wings of an attack, either of which was strong enough to defeat his forces. But it is indicative of the confidence Lee felt in both himself and his army that he did not see himself as the possible victim of a Federal trap. Lee immediately thought in terms of the offensive. He was not "caught" between the two closing masses of Hooker's army, but rather "positioned between" the two forces, "separating and dividing" them. This was not a problem; it was an opportunity. Lee then launched into the operation that would showcase his command and control system at its best, the Chancellorsville campaign.²⁸

Hooker, at first, did well. He put three corps, almost forty thousand men, across the river without much trouble from the Rebels. But Lee now began to see that the crossing of John Sedgwick's VI Corps below Fredericksburg was nothing more than a deception. As he had done with each of the previous commanders of the Army of the Potomac, Lee now began to get inside the head of Hooker.²⁹ On the 30th of April Hooker issued a general order in which he proclaimed the only choices left to Lee were to either face certain destruction or "...ingloriously fly..."³⁰ Lee, in fact had one more option,

and he chose to exercise it now. He let loose upon Hooker an Old Testament warrior against whom even Joshua pales in comparison-- Thomas Jonathan Jackson.

STONEWALL

"Stonewall" Jackson has been best described as a pious, blue-eyed killer. He believed that man was placed on this earth to accomplish his duty, and that duty for Jackson was to "make war and pray without ceasing."³¹ Many people thought him mad. He refused pepper because he thought it made his left leg ache and he had the rather disconcerting habit of keeping one hand in the air to keep himself from going "out of balance." It was said that in the excitement of battle his eyes glowed a bright blue. His men may have thought him severe and more than a bit strange, but they had no doubt what they were about with "Old Blue Light" at their head. When asked what should be done with the invading Yankees who were destroying his South, Jackson had a simple prescription: "Kill 'em," he said, "Kill 'em all."³²

Lee did not share a close personal relationship with Jackson as he did with Longstreet, but in terms of battle focus and shared intent, the minds of Lee and Jackson were as one. Even before Lee had decided what was to be done to counter the moves of Hooker, Jackson had his Second Corps in motion. Distant pickets were recalled, rations were cooked and

hurriedly eaten and horses were hitched to supply wagons. By the time Lee had decided to move, Jackson was ready.³³

Lee had made his decision. The greater threat, he correctly guessed, was from the north. He had only 65,500 men to face Hooker's 130,000, split into two massive wings. No matter. Lee would risk all. He would divide his small army in the face of Hooker's hosts. Leaving a small force to hold on the river, he and Jackson would take the remainder of his Army north and attack Hooker in the tangled mass of primeval growth known locally as simply "the Wilderness." ³⁴ Joe Hooker had said he hoped his plan would "...embolden the enemy to attack..." With Jackson at his side Lee, was supremely confident. Such was the command relationship which existed between the two men. Lee would see that Hooker's hopes would be completely realized.³⁵

By the time Jackson's lead elements made contact with the Yankees on the afternoon of 1 May, Hooker had upwards of 50,000 men marching toward the rear of Lee's position at Fredericksburg. Then, at about 1400, two things happened almost simultaneously--General George Sykes' Second division of the Federal Fifth Corps ran into rebel sharpshooters, and "Fighting Joe" Hooker began to lose his nerve. Hooker had done well against Lee as long as he hadn't had to actually fight Lee, but now the ghost of "Marse Robert" began to move in the gloom of the Wilderness. In later years Hooker was honest

about his reaction at the time. "To tell the truth," he said, "I just lost confidence in Joe Hooker."³⁶ Against the pleas of his commanders, Hooker ordered a halt in the movement of his army. He would, he told his men, make Lee come to him. And Jackson was on the way.

JACKSON'S COMMAND STYLE

Jackson's style of command and control was very different than that of Lee. Whereas Lee would issue broad, discretionary (mission) orders and leave the execution to his subordinates, Jackson issued the division commanders of his Second Corps specific instructions which provided them with exactly the information required to attain his objectives--and no more. Jackson believed firmly that providing more information than the mission required would both overburden the subordinate and risk violations of operational security. Jackson's primary operating principle was "Always mystify, mislead, and surprise the enemy..." If that entailed mystifying his own commanders as well, so be it.³⁷ On campaign he would typically alert his subordinates for movement, but never tell them where they were going.³⁸

The key to Jackson's command style was personal supervision. Jackson never felt the need to impart his intent to his subordinates because, after issuing his cryptic orders, he was always on the spot to insure they were carried out

exactly as he wished.³⁹ There was never any room for interpretation by subordinates, no matter the circumstances. The duty of his commanders was simply to follow his orders to the letter. Jackson, leading from the front, would provide all the guidance required.

This type of command and control, of course, complimented Lee's command style very well. Lee could, with confidence, issue discretionary orders to Jackson and be absolutely assured they would be carried out to the letter. This assurance sprang from two sources. First, Lee and Jackson were of a single mind. The command relationship that existed between the two approached magic. Lee himself characterized the relationship best when, following Jackson's death, he told an officer, "I had such implicit confidence in Jackson's skill and energy that I never troubled myself to give him detailed instructions. The most general suggestions were all that he needed."⁴⁰ Jackson, in other words, understood implicitly Lee's intent on every order.

Secondly, Jackson was absolutely dedicated to Lee. It was because of this devotion that Jackson could make the transition from independent army commander in the Shenandoah Valley to loyal subordinate in Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. Lee always sought Jackson's ideas and tactical solutions, but Jackson readily deferred to Lee in all

operational decisions.⁴¹ The command relationship between Lee and Jackson was, in all important respects, near perfect.

The same could not be said, however, about the command and control environment within Jackson's Corps. Jackson's method of leadership violated several important basic principles. His desire for absolute secrecy deprived his subordinates of any latitude on the battlefield. As they did not know Jackson's intent, they had no degree of freedom to exercise initiative in accomplishing their missions. Jackson commanded and Jackson led. All others blindly followed.

When the size of his command grew dramatically, as it did during the Chancellorsville campaign, he still continued to operate in the old manner. His focus was always at the soldier level, and, to Jackson, there was little difference between a private soldier and his generals. Jackson believed that his officers required only orders, and these he would provide.⁴²

All this combined to make Jackson "indispensable." His subordinates, having been taught that initiative was not desired, were entirely passive in their relationship with their commander. While this was exactly the sort of relationship Jackson wished, it did not bode well for situations where Jackson might not be present or when his commanders might be required to serve in other commands.

The command relationship in the Second Corps was so remarkable that on at least one occasion Lee felt compelled to

counsel Jackson. He advised him to spend more time developing his division commanders by keeping them informed of his movements and providing them with his intent so that they might have more freedom in mission accomplishment.⁴³ Jackson was totally devoted to his chief, but in this matter he would not change. The Second Corps would be run his way, and he was about to run it right over the top of "Fighting Joe" Hooker. "DUTY IS OURS. THE CONSEQUENCES, GOD'S"

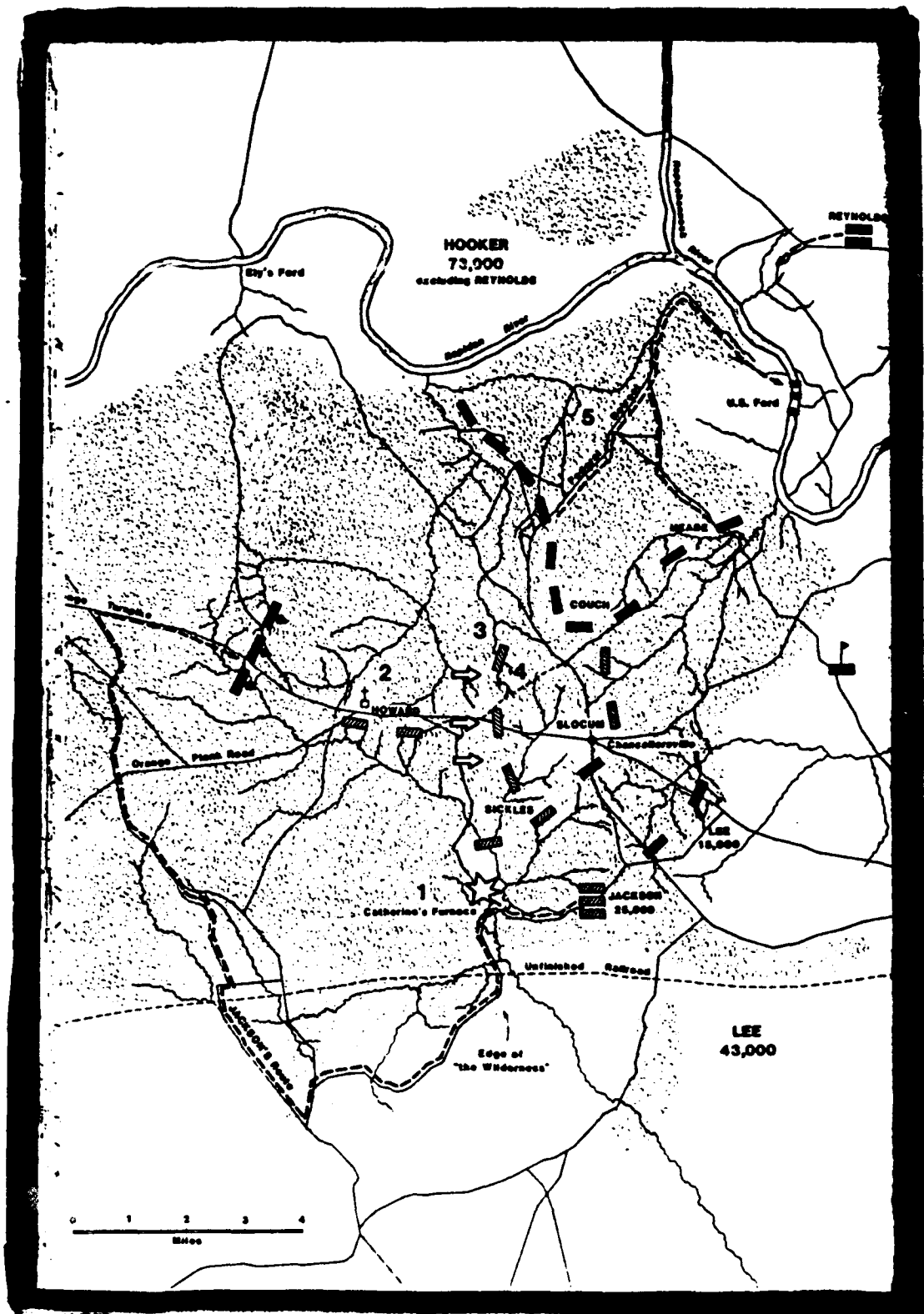
Hooker's artillery almost ended the Battle of Chancellorsville before it started. Jackson arrived on the field about 0800 hours on 1 May, and immediately laid out a strong trench system from which he could fight if required. But it was not in Jackson's nature to await an enemy, so with the majority of his force he went looking for the Union Army. This offensive action was exactly as Lee had directed in his original orders to Jackson when the latter left Fredericksburg, and at 1430 hours Lee sent another dispatch to Jackson reinforcing his intent to press Hooker back.⁴⁴ The old magic of the command relationship between Lee and Jackson was at work. Lee had already figured out that Hooker had changed his plan. He would soon guess that he had lost his nerve, and Jackson was moving to strike the floundering Federals before they could break out of the Wilderness and bring their huge superiority in numbers to bear.

Jackson first contacted a Federal cavalry screen which he promptly pushed in, but he then ran into the regulars of Sykes' infantry. Jackson wished to flank the enemy force, and, happening upon Jeb Stuart, enlisted his help in trying to find a way around the Federal infantry. As Stuart soon discovered, a "Jackson reconnaissance" was always conducted by the General himself. The two men and their escorts halted just forward of their lines where Jackson directed a Confederate battery to fire down a narrow path toward what might be enemy positions. Enemy they were, and ready too, for their hidden batteries suddenly opened a return fire which Stuart's adjutant described as a "...storm of shell and canister, which, concentrated on so narrow a space, did fearful execution among our party..."⁴⁵ The cannonade tore the ground beneath Jackson's horse and felled men to his left and right. That he was not himself killed was miraculous. Jackson was again employing his command style of leading always from the front, of trying to do everything himself, and of not allowing his subordinate commanders to plan and conduct their operations within the bounds of his intent. He was, again, making himself the indispensable man, and in the tangled maze of the Wilderness, where death always lingered near, this could be a dangerous proposition indeed. Exactly how dangerous, all would know within twenty-four hours.

As night came on, Jackson warily felt to his front in an effort to make some sense of Hooker's dispositions. Leaving explicit instructions for his defensive line (he even chose the challenge and pass for the night, Liberty/Independence), he rode off to confer with Lee, who had arrived in the Wilderness and was camped near the junction of Plank and Furnace Roads.⁴⁶

Jackson and Lee first met at the junction of the roads (see map 2), but were soon pushed into the woods by a pesky Union sharpshooter who had ranged the junction and popped off shots whenever a target came into view. It was there, in a stand of pines, at dusk on the first of May, that the most remarkable meeting Lee and Jackson would hold took place--a meeting which graphically demonstrated not only the operational acumen of the two leaders, but also the near-mystical bond of shared intent which existed between the two.⁴⁷

Lee moved to a fallen pine, sat down and offered Jackson a seat beside him. Lee asked his Lieutenant for an update on the current situation to his front, to which Jackson offered his opinion that the weak resistance shown by the Federals probably indicated that they had failed in their operation and would withdraw over the river as soon as possible. Lee listened, thought, and shook his head. Lee knew Hooker was stymied but did not think he would withdraw on his own. How



Map 2

then to drive him out? The two Generals agreed that the left flank of the Federal defensive works was securely anchored on the Rappahannock and offered no hope of a successful attack. The Federal center was also suspected to be strongly entrenched, and staff officers were sent forward to confirm this. That left the Federal right, about which little was known.

At this point, for the first time that night, providence intervened. Jeb Stuart, his red cape flowing behind him, came jangling up and vaulted quickly off his horse to join Lee and Jackson. He brought electrifying news. "Fitz" Lee, one of his cavalry brigade commanders, had discovered that the Federal right flank was "in the air." Without a word between them, the thoughts of Lee and Jackson immediately focused on the beginnings of a plan. All attack options, save this new possibility presented by Stuart, were discarded by both men. The enemy had an exposed flank, but how to get on it for an attack? Stuart, tireless as always, said he would check for a route immediately, and rode away.⁴⁸ Jackson and Lee were again left alone in the darkening pines. The staff officers sent to conduct the reconnaissance of the Federal center returned to report that it was, as suspected, a mass of entrenched infantry supported by well-sighted artillery, and much too strong to be carried. No matter. This option had already been rejected by the Commanders. The answer obviously lay on the

Federal right flank, but how to move a full corps there, through the tangled hell of the Wilderness, without the move being discovered by Hooker? Lee's field map, which provided only vague details about the local terrain, showed no suitable route to Hooker's exposed flank. Lee, still seated on the log, seemed lost in thought as he continued to stare intently at the map, looking for the road which was needed but not shown. Jackson stood over his chief, patiently waiting his thoughts. Members of the staffs, standing close enough to hear, but never daring to intrude, reported that Lee's concentration on the map was so intense that he seemed to be trying to force it to give him the information it did not contain.⁴⁹ Then speaking almost to himself, Lee said "How can we get at those people?" Jackson, now looking at the map, replied softly, "You know best. Show me what to do and we will do it." Neither had bothered to even look up, but in that instant the linking of these two great minds had been made. Lee thought for a moment and, with the tip of his gloved finger, traced a route westward and then northward, from their present location to the right flank of the enemy. That would be the movement. Then Jackson heard the words for which he had been waiting. "General Stuart will cover your movement with his cavalry," said Lee.

And, that is all he said.

Jackson stood quickly, the legendary and fearsome "blue light" now flashing in his eyes. He quickly saluted and replied, "My troops will move at four o'clock."

And, that is all he said.

In this very short, and, to observers, near cryptic exchange, the two issues critical to the command and control of the Army of Northern Virginia in the Battle of Chancellorsville had been decided. Lee had assigned to Jackson the mission of the main attack and, with only the broadest sort of mission order guidance, had delegated to his subordinate complete responsibility for the tactical planning and conduct of that attack. Lee, as commander, would support Jackson's plan, whatever it may be. How could Lee do this? How was he so sure that Jackson would produce a plan and orchestrate a battle completely in concert with the wishes of his commander? He could do so because he was absolutely confident that the full intent of his orders were understood by Jackson. Lee knew that nothing more need be said--that his will would be done.

His trust and confidence would be sorely tried when Jackson presented his plan of attack the next morning. A Chaplain on Jackson's staff had been a circuit preacher in the Chancellorsville area. He had found a local resident who knew of a route, unmarked on maps, which led to the Federal right flank (as shown on map 2). The route was checked by Jackson's

Corps staff cartographer and placed on his detailed map.⁵⁰ By the time Lee arose just before dawn, Jackson had a route and a plan. It would cause Lee to divide his small force yet again. The risks were astounding, but Lee never hesitated. He knew that Jackson, knowing full well his intent, would not ask for more than required, and would risk only when necessary. This Lee knew, and that knowledge was enough.

By 1715 hours Jackson had completed the march and 28,000 Confederate infantry were in position on the flank of Hooker's XI Corps. They had arrived there, as always, with Jackson at their head. He had personally led the march and, when the situation dictated, halted his men and gone forward himself for reconnaissance of the enemy's positions. It was a dangerous way to do business, but once again "Old Jack" beat the odds, and when he gave the order to attack, the gray host went forward like a terrible tidal wave, sweeping all before it.⁵¹ The result was carnage on a huge scale, and all indications were that yet another chapter in the storied history of "Stonewall" and his Corps would be concluded with the greatest jubilation. And then Jackson's luck ran out.

In the dusk of the early evening of that day Jackson's attack had begun to falter as units became entangled and men lost their way. Jackson, reacting as he always had, rode forward of his lines to fix the location of the enemy. Returning in the dark, he and his staff rode into the lines of

the 18th North Carolina, which, unfortunately, had just repulsed a Yankee cavalry attack. Hearing horsemen coming out of the dark and fearing more of the same, the Carolinians went to kneeling order and delivered a deadly volley.⁵² Two of Jackson's staff fell dead from their saddles.⁵³ The General himself was wounded in three places. Eight days later, amid recitations of the Fifty-First Psalm, he was dead.⁵⁴

The effect of Jackson's death on Lee cannot be overestimated. Lee, an intelligent and sensitive man, knew that a great part of his world had passed when Jackson died. He knew that Jackson was, in the fullest sense of the word, irreplaceable. This irreplaceability extended beyond the command of the Second Corps of the Army of Northern Virginia. It extended into the very center of Robert E. Lee. On the third of May he had written Jackson that he "...could not express his regret at the occurrence." In official correspondence, he congratulated his lieutenant on the great victory of Chancellorsville, and, speaking from the depths of his heart, wrote that had he a choice, he would have chosen to have been wounded in Jackson's stead.⁵⁵ "God will not take him," he wrote hopefully, "now that we need him so much."⁵⁶ No one needed him more than did Lee. For Lee to be "Lee," there had to be a Jackson--someone who could interpret Lee's discretionary orders, divine from them his operational intent, and convert this intent into success on the battlefield. Of

all Lee's lieutenants, only Jackson could do this. It was the presence of Jackson which had allowed Lee to command as he had. Unfortunately for the Army of Northern Virginia, he would continue to command in this manner with subordinates who had neither the understanding nor the talents of Jackson. The greatest test of the Army loomed close ahead. For that test, Robert E. Lee would continue as if commanding Jackson, but Jackson was dead.

THE GETTYSBURG CAMPAIGN: JUNE-JULY 1863

THE REORGANIZATION

Jackson's death presented Lee with a crucial command and control problem. Who should succeed to the command of Jackson's Second Corps? "I do not know how to replace him," Lee wrote to his wife and, in the end, he decided not to try.⁵⁷ The infantry of the Army of Northern Virginia had been divided into but two corps, the First led by Longstreet and the Second by Jackson. Lee knew that he could never truly replace Jackson, so he devised a reorganization which went far beyond simply finding a new corps commander. He would completely reorganize, forming a totally new corps and realigning the divisions of the "old" corps to more nearly balance his units.

The reorganization was a wise choice for Lee in many ways. He had, through General Orders, notified the Army of the death of Jackson and of the seriousness of the loss.⁵⁸ He must now follow through with visible action to minimize the problems the loss would cause. His sweeping reorganization did this. Further, the reorganization made good tactical sense. An Army of three corps, each approximately equal in combat power, offered more flexibility and capability than the old organization of two heavy corps. But, there were also problems with the reorganization. The largest lay in the selection of commanders.

General James Longstreet would retain command of the First Corps. The command relationship between Lee and Longstreet was, as mentioned earlier, one which often baffled observers. "Old Peter," as he was playfully called by his brother officers, was a most competent soldier, but he could be blunt, arrogant, and, most of all, stubborn when his views were not accepted.⁵⁹ Lee, at times, was angry with Longstreet, but more often displayed toward him an affection shown no other officer in the Army. Lee had a different nickname for his lieutenant. He called Longstreet "My Old War Horse."⁶⁰

General Richard Ewell would succeed Jackson at the head of the Second Corps. Ewell was also a West Point graduate and had gained fame as a leader of Dragoons in the Mexican War. Ewell had served with distinction as a division commander

under Jackson until suffering the loss of a leg at Groveton. After the wound he was never quite the same. The old fire was gone and he became nervous, fidgety and unable to sleep. While convalescing, the old bachelor married, and returned to his men not the tough, hell-for-leather dragoon Jackson had once recommended for higher command, but a sedate, absent-minded old man who preferred now to ride in a buggy. His men were distraught. "From a military point of view," wrote an officer of the Corps staff, "the addition of the wife did not compensate for the loss of the leg."⁶¹ Ewell had one other characteristic which might not bode well for service under the command style of Lee. He was a man who did not respond well to choices. Decision making seemed to irritate and confuse him. Service under the extremely directive style of Jackson had suited him just fine. Jackson had stood between Ewell and Lee, filtering orders and deciding what his subordinates should know and do. Ewell would now be on his own.

The "new" corps of the Army, the Third, would be commanded by the fiery Ambrose Powell (A.P.) Hill. He had commanded divisions under both Longstreet and Jackson and had succeeded in making an enemy of both men. Jackson once placed him under arrest and Longstreet hated him so that he once challenged Hill to a duel.⁶² Hill could be a fighter, but he was inconsistent, and on occasion had performed well below expectations. Some thought he might do so again if not closely

directed, and "close direction" was not how Lee preferred to command.

Along with the problems of personalities, Lee's new organization suffered from a lack of experience. Two of the three corps commanders were new to their jobs and had never handled formations larger than a division. Losses had drawn heavily from the lower ranks as well. Only four of nine division commanders were experienced in their current positions, and of thirty-seven Brigades, six had new commanders and six had Colonels in command due to the heavy losses sustained in Brigadiers.⁶³ This, then, was the Army with which Lee would invade the North in 1863, an Army fraught with command and control problems.

When Jackson died, Lee admonished his followers that they "...all must all do more than formerly."⁶⁴ He, surely, would set the example in this. But could he adapt his command style enough to convey his operational intent to his new commanders? Could he meet the needs of the Army he now commanded, an Army rendered very different by the loss of Jackson?

THE DECISION TO INVADE

The answer would not be long in coming. For some time Lee had been of the notion that the only salvation for the Confederacy lay in offensive action. Only one month after Chancellorsville, he wrote James Seddon, the Confederate

Secretary of War, and expressed his views concerning the strategy the South should now follow. "There is nothing to be gained by this Army remaining quietly on the defensive," he wrote. The Union Army was too large and well entrenched behind the Rappahannock to be attacked successfully, and therefore must be "...drawn out in a position to be assailed."⁶⁵ The correct strategy for his Army, Lee believed, was to "draw" the Yankees out to a favorable battlefield, and the most favorable battlefields, he said, lay in the North.

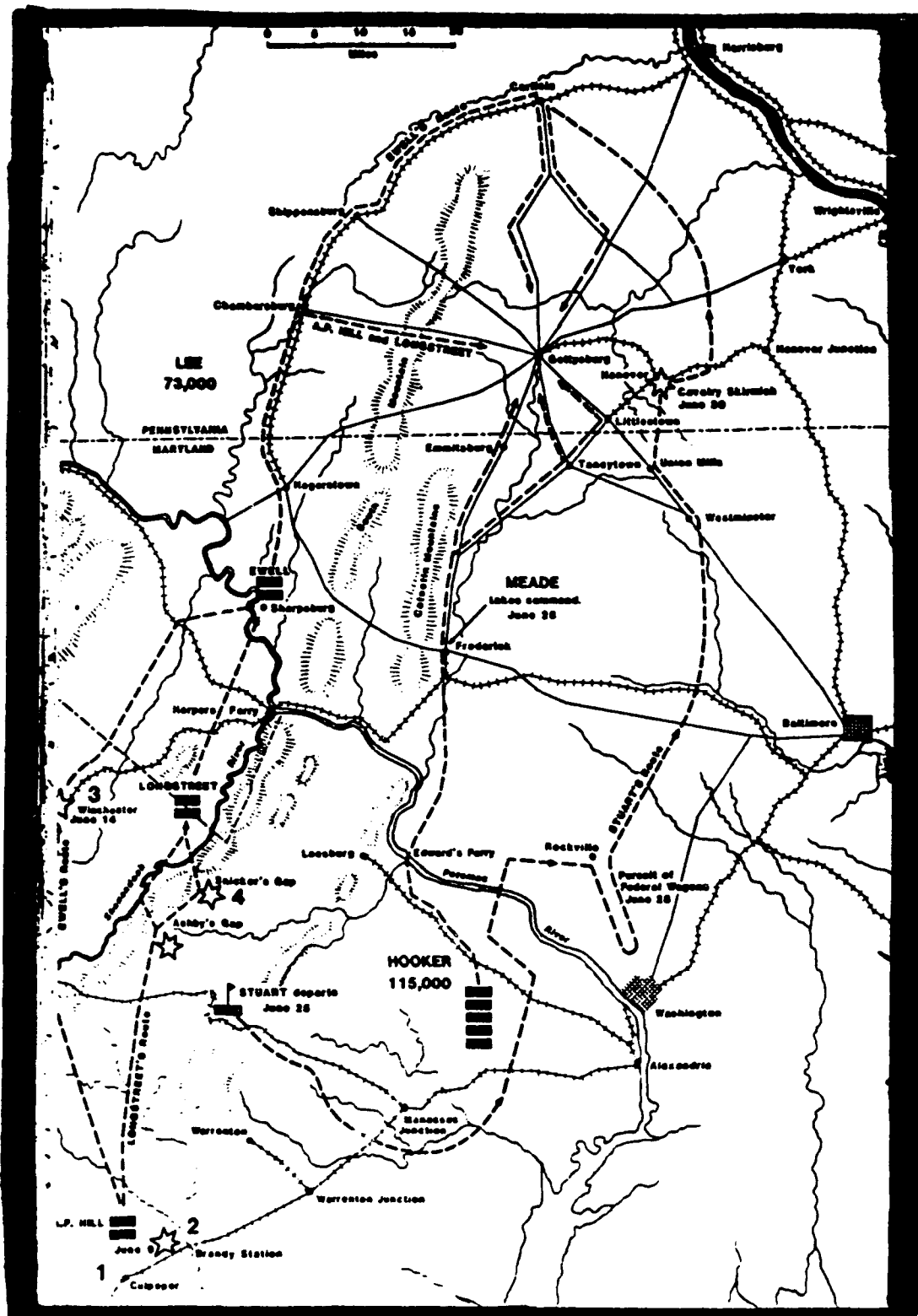
The Confederacy was in desperate straits in the summer of 1863. In the East, Lee's logistical situation worsened each day. He had stripped Virginia bare of supplies and his men and horses would soon go hungry. The situation in the West was even worse. The tenacious Grant continued to close the noose around Vicksburg and Bragg and Johnston seemed helpless in the face of continued Federal onslaughts. Jefferson Davis proposed sending a portion of Lee's Army west to relieve the pressure on Vicksburg, but Lee had a counter proposal. The best way to relieve the situation in the West, he told Davis, was to invade the North. Such an invasion would so alarm the North as to cause Lincoln to call off operations in the West to block Lee's forces as they moved toward Philadelphia, Baltimore, and perhaps, Washington. This would cause the North to see that the Confederacy was still strong and that the only alternative to a long war was a peace which guaranteed Southern

independence.⁶⁶ The government in Richmond considered Lee's plan, and not daring to question the judgement of the victor of Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, granted him permission to invade. Lee's plan was approved and, on 14 June, he issued the orders commencing the movement of his Army.⁶⁷

Lee's plan was to move his force up the Shenandoah valley, cross the Potomac into Pennsylvania, and drive toward the Sesquehanna (see map 3). Ewell's Second Corps would lead, followed by Hill and Longstreet. Stuart's cavalry would screen the move from Yankee eyes by moving on the right flank of the infantry. All seemed in readiness. Then, the first of a series of disasters struck.

SURPRISE AT BEVERLY FORD

Jeb Stuart had always liked a show. Camped with his new, enlarged cavalry force at Brandy Station, Stuart determined to have a giant review of his division before they set off for the North. He set the date for 5 June and invited a host of military and civilian dignitaries. When Lee informed him the he would be unable to attend on the 5th, Stuart simply scheduled a repeat performance for the 8th. The review on both days went off magnificently, though Lee did express concern about tired horses and wasted powder. Still, the sight of almost 10,000 mounted men in review caused a patriotic thrill among the men and the ladies (at least those who were



Map 3

unattached) to swoon. Stuart was in his glory.⁶⁸ Following the review, the entire force broke camp and turned in so as to get an early start for the Potomac in the morning. Such was Stuart's plan.

But it was not the plan of Alfred Pleasonton, the new commander of the cavalry of the Army of the Potomac. His scouts had found Stuart's encampment, and at about 0400 hours on 9 June the Federal cavalry came storming across the Rappahannock River, surprised Stuart and his sleepy force, and fought them hard all day before retiring at sunset. It was the largest cavalry battle of the war, and Stuart had clearly been bested.⁶⁹

His embarrassment grew when the papers of Richmond, many of whom already took a dim view of Stuart's antics, blasted his "...puffed up cavalry" for its "...negligence and bad management."⁷⁰ Jeb was stung and immediately began to cast about for a means to retrieve his precious reputation. He needed a spectacular feat of arms. But what?

The answer soon came to Jeb. He would employ only a portion of his cavalry force in screening the northward move of the Army, the mission originally assigned by Lee. The remainder, three of his five brigades, he would lead on yet another of his famous rides around the Union Army. These rides had always garnered praise for Stuart while serving to distract and confuse the enemy. Stuart, convinced that he

could satisfy the traditional cavalry missions of screening and gathering intelligence and, at the same time regain his reputation, took his plan to his commander.⁷¹

If ever there was a time when Lee should have made his intent absolutely clear to a subordinate, it was now. Lee's operational style depended heavily on intelligence gathered by his cavalry. His movement into unknown, enemy territory would accentuate this need. Indeed, early intelligence on the movements of the larger Union Army was now vital to the success of Lee's mission, if not his very survival. All this must have been as obvious then as now, but Lee's reaction to Stuart's request was a model of confused mission and intent.

On 22 June Lee directed his Aide-de-Camp, Colonel Charles Marshall, to write Stuart granting qualified permission for his ride around the Union Army. Lee expressed his fear that the Federals might "...steal a march on us and get across the Potomac before we are aware." He granted Stuart permission to move off with three of his brigades if he felt the other two were sufficient to "...guard the Blue Ridge and take care of your rear."⁷² In other words, the final decision remained with Stuart. Doubt now overtook the usually confident Lee. He must have sensed, deep inside, that this venture proposed by Stuart was terribly risky, especially given the situations the Army might soon face. Yet, he did not withdraw his permission for the enterprise. Instead, torn between what

his subordinate wished and what he knew his plan required, Lee decided to fully support neither. What he did was further confuse the issue by having Marshall send yet another message, the second in twenty-four hours.⁷³ In this message Lee provided Stuart with a confusing set of "negative" instructions which were to be followed if Hooker did "not" do certain things. It was the middle of the message, however, that was to prove so important to Lee's campaign. Here he told Stuart that "...you will, however, be able to judge whether you can pass around their Army without hindrance."⁷⁴ Implicit, yet unspoken in all of this, was Lee's desire that Stuart's first priority remain the security of the Army, but the Commander's intent was unclear. The instructions to Stuart were conditional, but the conditions were unknown. Lee's discretionary orders would leave the final decision for the method of employment of his cavalry arm to Stuart. And no one who knew Jeb Stuart had any doubt that he would ride off in search of glory, leaving Lee to grope his way north into hostile territory, blind and deaf.⁷⁵ Lee's actions mirrored Hooker's great mistake at Chancellorsville. As Jackson had stated of Hooker, "He should not have sent away his cavalry. That was his great blunder."⁷⁶ Lee, the master of the battlefield, had made a grievous error in command. He now began to lose control.⁷⁷

THE MOVE NORTH

The move to the north began well enough. The corps concentrated as directed, the cavalry screen held, and spirits were high. "Our Army is in good spirits," wrote Lee, and he wished this invasion to be a model of soldierly constraint in its dealings with the civilians encountered along the way.⁷⁸ To ensure his wishes were known, he published a General Order stating precise guidelines for Southern troops in enemy territory.⁷⁹ The irony in all of this is, of course, that these are the only precise orders and the only specific intent Lee would issue during the entire campaign.

The first contacts with the enemy seemed to confirm both the now legendary prowess of the Army of Northern Virginia and Lee's new command appointments. Winchester, that most conquered of American cities (it would change hands 72 times during the war!), provided the first test. The Second Corps, with Ewell at its head, had been given the mission by Lee to move into Pennsylvania and on to the Susquehanna. The capital, Harrisburg, might itself become an objective as the campaign developed.⁸⁰ This was the sort of guidance Ewell, called by the less-than-flattering nickname of "Old Bald Head" by his soldiers, could understand and act upon: simple, direct, straightforward orders that recalled the command and control climate of the Second Corps under Jackson. And, as Ewell moved on Winchester, it seemed as if "Old Blue Light" had returned.

Ewell quickly out-maneuvered and out-fought the Yankee garrison in the town and, by the time the dust settled on 16 June, he had captured 3,358 of the defenders, killed or run off the rest, and served as the guest of honor at a victory ball staged by grateful townspeople. All this at a loss of only 369 of his own men.⁸¹

Ewell did not wish to waste time. By the 19th he had crossed into Maryland and on the 22nd he sent his vanguard into Pennsylvania. To Ewell, the march deep into enemy territory reminded him of his service as an officer in a Dragoon Regiment during the Mexican War. "The people look as sour as vinegar," he wrote, "and would likely send us to Kingdom Come if they could."⁸²

On the 27th Ewell reached Carlisle, home of a cavalry barracks of the "old army" and well known to most of the officers of both the Union and the Confederacy.⁸³ The men conducted themselves as the seasoned professionals they were, and gained the grudging admiration of the local population. "Many were ragged, shoeless, and filthy," wrote one civilian of the invaders, but they were "well armed and under perfect discipline."⁸⁴ The Confederates, for their part, found the Pennsylvania countryside rich and well-tended. They also gained a good appreciation of the immensity of Northern manpower when they saw so many healthy men not serving in the Federal Army. As one soldier said it gave the Southerners

"...a realizing sense of the strength of the enemy to see they could have so large armies in the field and leave so many lusty men in peace at home."⁸⁵ This "strength" would be translated into Yankee rifles on the battlefield and, when the fight came, would have an enormous impact on the operational designs of Lee.

Separate divisions of Ewell's Corps invested York and, almost as an afterthought, the small crossroads town of Gettysburg, where the troops moved on after picking up a few boxes of freight from the railway station.⁸⁶ Following Lee's orders, Ewell continued his drive north. The prize of the Pennsylvania capital seemed within his grasp.⁸⁷ Then, on Sunday, the 28th of June, a hulking, mysterious man rode into Lee's camp with news that would end Ewell's drive and change forever the direction of the Confederacy.

The man was known simply as "Harrison," and his business was spying. In those kinder days such men were known as "scouts," though this nicety of address did little to endear them to men such as Lee. But these were desperate times. Lee's forces were deep into enemy territory and, in the absence of Stuart, were without the current information on which survival itself could depend. Lee, though he was repelled by men of Harrison's profession, was convinced by Longstreet to hear the spy's report. And Harrison had much to report.⁸⁸

His first piece of information was that the Army of the Potomac was on the move, and knew, in great detail, the disposition of Lee's forces. Lee was shocked, and more importantly, he was surprised. Robert E. Lee was not accustomed to surprise from the Northern Army, and being surprised now seemed particularly odd, given the predictability of Joe Hooker. This led to Harrison's second piece of intelligence. Hooker had been sacked. The Army of the Potomac had a new commander, its third in only six months. His name was George Gordon Meade. If Harrison's first piece of news was disturbing, this second was clearly ominous. Lee knew most of the northern generals either from the old army or from opposing them during the war. Meade, a fellow engineer, was a friend from before the war. Lee both admired and respected the Pennsylvanian and admonished his staff that this was no Burnside or Hooker. "He will make no mistake to my front," said Lee, "and if I make one, he will make haste to take advantage of it."⁸⁹

Lee now had to act quickly. Meade was closing on him and he had no precise intelligence as to the location or strength of the Army of the Potomac. Lee knew he must concentrate his scattered forces in order to be prepared for Meade, and he first turned his attention to Ewell's Second Corps. On the evening of the 28th, Lee had ordered Ewell to "...move directly upon Harrisburg."⁹⁰ This suited "Old Bald Head" just

fine and he prepared the men of his Corps for the assault and capture of the Pennsylvania capital. But this order had no more been dispatched than Lee had his fateful meeting with the spy Harrison--a meeting which changed the whole operational situation (Harrison riding into Lee's camp must have passed by the courier to Ewell riding out!). Lee, after hearing Harrison's report, ordered his aide Marshall to send another message to Ewell, countermanding the first order and directing him to return to Chambersburg immediately. Ewell, bitterly disappointed at losing the glory of capturing Harrisburg, turned his divisions around and started them south.⁹¹

All this was bad enough, but no sooner had Ewell's lead division begun the march to Chambersburg than yet another countermanding set of instructions arrived from Lee. Ewell was now directed to move not to Chambersburg, but to Gettysburg. Ewell was not familiar at all with the routes to Gettysburg, so he naturally looked to Lee to provide precise concentrating instructions. That is what Jackson would have done in this situation and Ewell expected the same sort of direction from Lee. He did not get it. Lee, operating as was his want, issued Ewell's orders in the same discretionary style he had used with Jackson. Ewell was given a choice of routes to Gettysburg, and each choice had a vague set of conditions which "might" be followed should a particular route be chosen.⁹² Ewell was both frustrated and confused, but, at dawn

on 30 June, he again turned his Corps and headed now for Gettysburg.

On the evening of the 30th he had reached Heidlersburg where he again received countermanding orders. Lee, lacking up-to-date intelligence and attempting to cover all possible contingencies, now ordered Ewell to move to either Cashtown or Gettysburg, " ...as circumstances might dictate."⁹³

For Ewell, all this was too much. "What circumstances?" he must have asked. He had received four sets of orders in 48 hours. Each set of instructions was more imprecise than the one before. Lee's discretionary orders, issued as they were without any statement of his intent, demanded his subordinate make hard choices without knowing the full consequences of his decisions. Lee was communicating with Ewell as though he were Jackson, and the effect on Ewell was devastating. Ewell became increasingly indecisive as events began to overwhelm him, and by the time he reached Gettysburg the following day, he had ceased to command. The Second Corps would fight the battle of Gettysburg without effective command or control.

As the befuddled Ewell made his way toward Gettysburg, Lee massed the remainder of his Army. Hill with the Third Corps would march on Gettysburg from his present location at Cashtown and Longstreet's First Corps would come in from Chambersburg. On the other side, Meade learned of all this from civilians in the Pennsylvania countryside and moved

decisively to concentrate his own forces to oppose the apparent Confederate aim of occupying Gettysburg in force.⁹⁴ Meade's forces would be coming from the vicinity of Taneytown, an accident of geography which set in place one of the many ironies of the coming battle--Northern forces would enter Gettysburg from the south while Southern forces would enter the town from the North.

INDECISION AT THE CENTER: LEE'S CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVE

But enter to do what? What guidance had Lee provided his Corps Commanders in the event they should make contact with a Union force? He had, in fact, provided little guidance, and what he had given was contradictory. A commander moving into enemy territory where the likelihood of serious combat is high should ensure that his subordinates have both specific instructions to cover planned actions and clear commander's intent to provide broad guidance in situations not covered by those specific orders. This intent sets the bounds within which subordinates may act and still be assured of contributing to the command's overall campaign objective.⁹⁵ Close study of Lee's orders to his subordinates and his recorded conversations with commanders and friends as he moved North reveal that he may not have been sure of his intent in the campaign.

Years later he would claim that he had not sought battle across the Potomac, but had invaded the North only to seek provisions while demonstrating the strength of the Confederate Army. This demonstration, he hoped, would show the Northern government that its best course lay in ending the war immediately. He fought, he said, only because he had been "surprised" by Meade due to the absence of Stuart.⁹⁶ If, in fact, this campaign strategy of "invasion with the aim not to fight" was Lee's true intent, his actions once he crossed the Potomac do not bear it out. The aim of his proposed operations, as shown by the directed movements of his Corps, was quite plain--he intended to draw the Army of the Potomac out from behind its fortifications, cause it to conduct a forced march north, and there defeat its arriving components in detail. All this he stated to his old friend General Isaac Trimble on 26 June. Lee expected the Yankees "...to come up, ...broken down with hunger and hard marching...strung out...and demoralized." Lee then looked at his map and placed his hand on the southern portion of Pennsylvania. "Hereabout we shall probably meet the enemy and fight a great battle," he told his friend, "and if God gives us the victory, the war will be over and we shall achieve the recognition of our independence." Trimble noted that at the center of the area Lee indicated on the map lay a then-unknown village called Gettysburg.⁹⁷

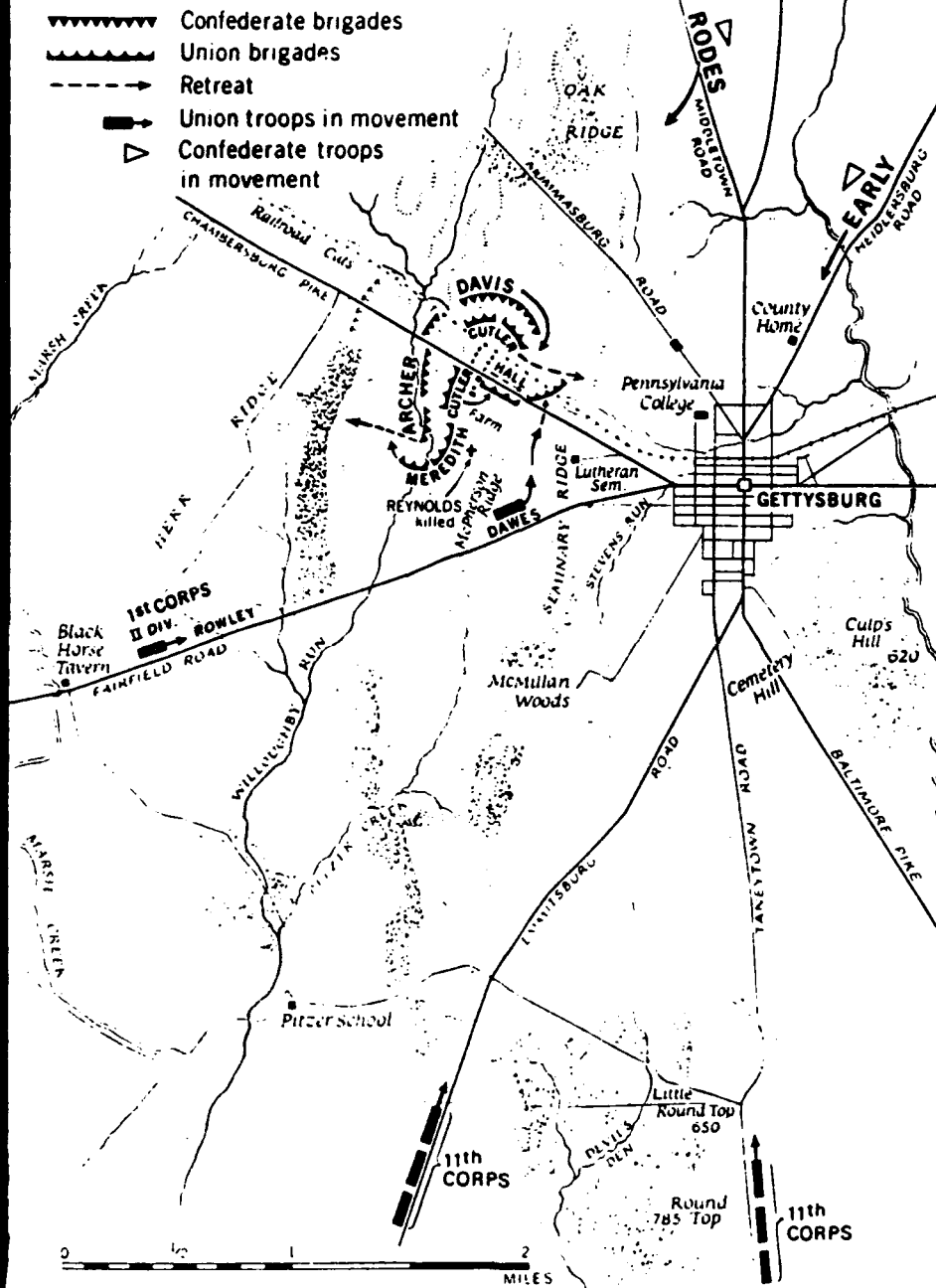
How can such diverse statements of commander's intent be justified? They can not, and herein lies a key reason for the defeat The Army of Northern Virginia would suffer one week later. Lee himself had no clear objective for the campaign he was undertaking. As he had no clear objective, he could offer his subordinates no clear orders or intent. So it was that even as Lee consolidated his forces in such a manner as to make a tremendous battle inevitable, he was issuing orders that his commanders should not bring on a "general engagement."⁹⁸ As the great battle grew nearer, the sense of purpose and clear intent in the Army of Northern Virginia weakened, and the source of this weakness was Lee himself.

THE FIRST DAY

The greatest battle ever fought on the continent of North America began as a fight over shoes. On 1 July, A.P. Hill's Third Corps, in accordance with Lee's orders for concentration, had marched to Cashtown, only eight miles from Gettysburg (see map 4). The Confederate Army always seemed to be short of shoes, and on this day Hill's men were no exception. There was rumored to be a large supply of footwear in Gettysburg, and General Henry Heth, commander of Hill's lead division, asked if he could take his men into town and "liberate" them.⁹⁹ Hill knew that a force of Federal cavalry had been reported in the town, but he figured the shoes could

MAP 4

Illustrating the infantry engagement morning of July 1.
Markers indicate approximate position of troops and artillery
from 11:00 A.M. — arrows indicate direction of following
action.



be taken without bringing on the "general engagement" Lee sought to avoid until the Army was concentrated. He told Heth to move on in.

Heth moved out at dawn on 1 July, but he had gone only five miles when, at about 0800 hours, he ran into the two cavalry brigades of General John Buford, a no-nonsense horse soldier who loved hard fighting and was, by the way, very good at it. Buford's men were armed with the new Spencer repeating carbine, and they immediately began to take a toll on Heth's infantry.¹⁰⁰ Buford soon received reinforcements in the form of General John Reynold's First Corps. Hill reinforced Heth and, before noon, the "general engagement" Lee sought to avoid was in full flower.






Lee, as was his custom, was travelling with Longstreet and was just west of Cashtown when he heard the ominous sounds of the battle. At first he was not alarmed, but soon he recognized the sound was too heavy for a skirmish and that Hill was involved in a major fight. Leaving Longstreet, he rode quickly east on the Chambersburg Pike with his staff to find Hill. What he found was that Hill had no idea what was going on. Always high strung and prone to "illness" at times of crisis, Hill had again taken to his bed, this time with a severe intestinal disorder.¹⁰¹ Hill, like Ewell, would prove a poor selection for Corps Command in the newly-reorganized Army. New to his responsibilities, facing uncertain odds far

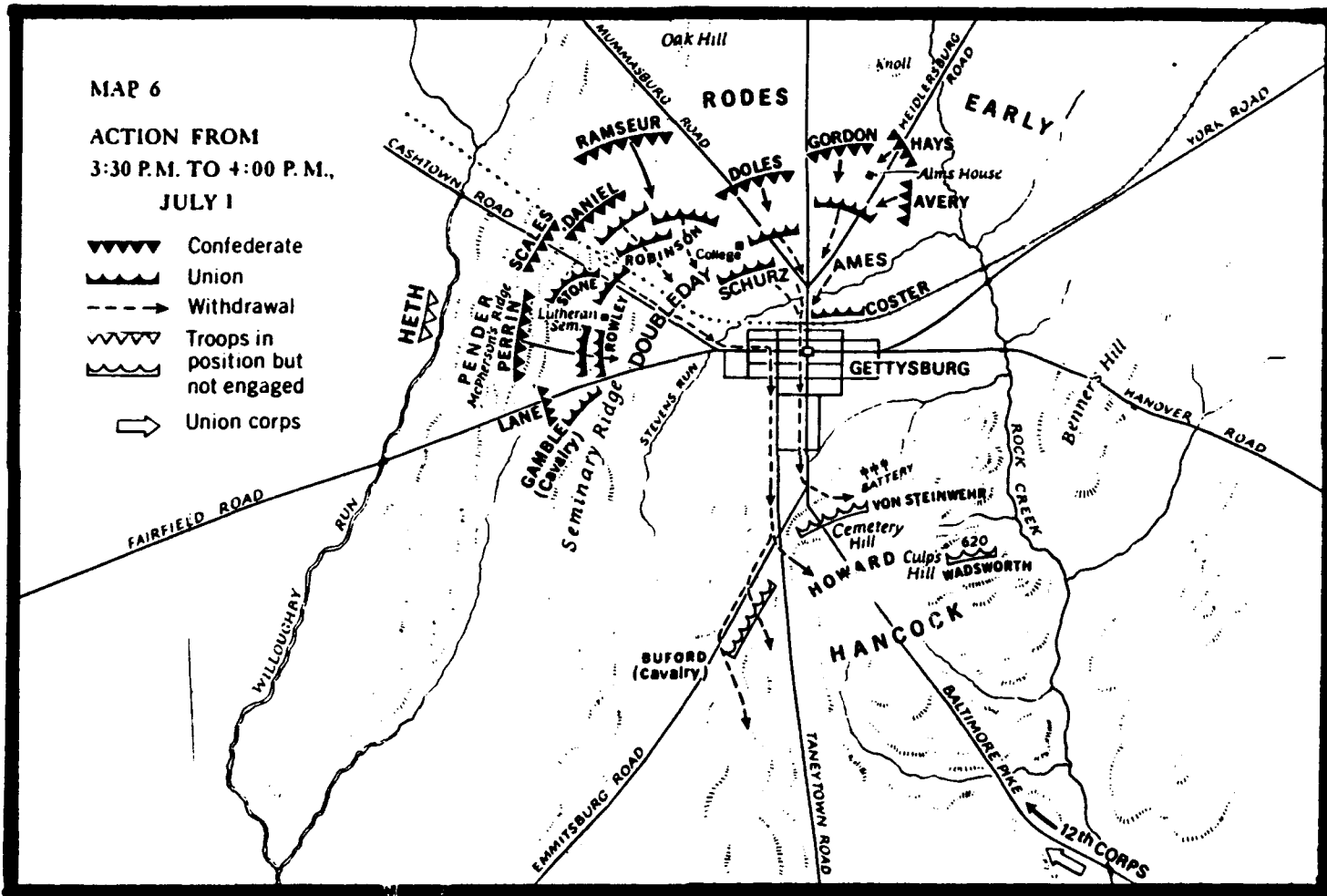
from home, and bereft of close guidance and supervision by his commander, Hill would join Ewell as a mere observer of the events of the next three days. Lee, surely aware that the tactical situation was slipping beyond his control, spurred on toward Gettysburg and the battle which was growing there.

What he found on the fields of Gettysburg left no doubt that Heth was indeed involved in a "general engagement." Hill's Corps had now closed on the field as had two Union Corps. The Federal First Corps (Doubleday) had taken position to the left of the Chambersburg Pike and the Eleventh Corps (Shurz) had just deployed on the right.¹⁰² It appeared as though Hill's Third Corps would be flanked and overwhelmed when, marching at quick step toward the sound of the fighting, Ewell's lead division (Early) appeared, by luck, exactly on the flank of the Union Eleventh Corps (see map 5). To the hapless Yankees it seemed like Chancellorsville all over again. The blue line collapsed rapidly as the screaming Confederates drove them into the town. Withdrawal became a rout, and rout became panic as the chase was on. Lee, watching all this from near the Pike then made a momentous decision. He decided not to wait for Longstreet's Corps to close up, but sent word to Ewell and Hill to throw in everything they had.¹⁰³ He had run into Meade's Army by accident, but the situation appeared to be developing into another major victory. And so it might have, had Lee's flawed system of

MAP 6

ACTION FROM
3:30 P.M. TO 4:00 P.M.,
JULY 1

-  Confederate
-  Union
-  Withdrawal
-  Troops in position but not engaged
-  Union corps



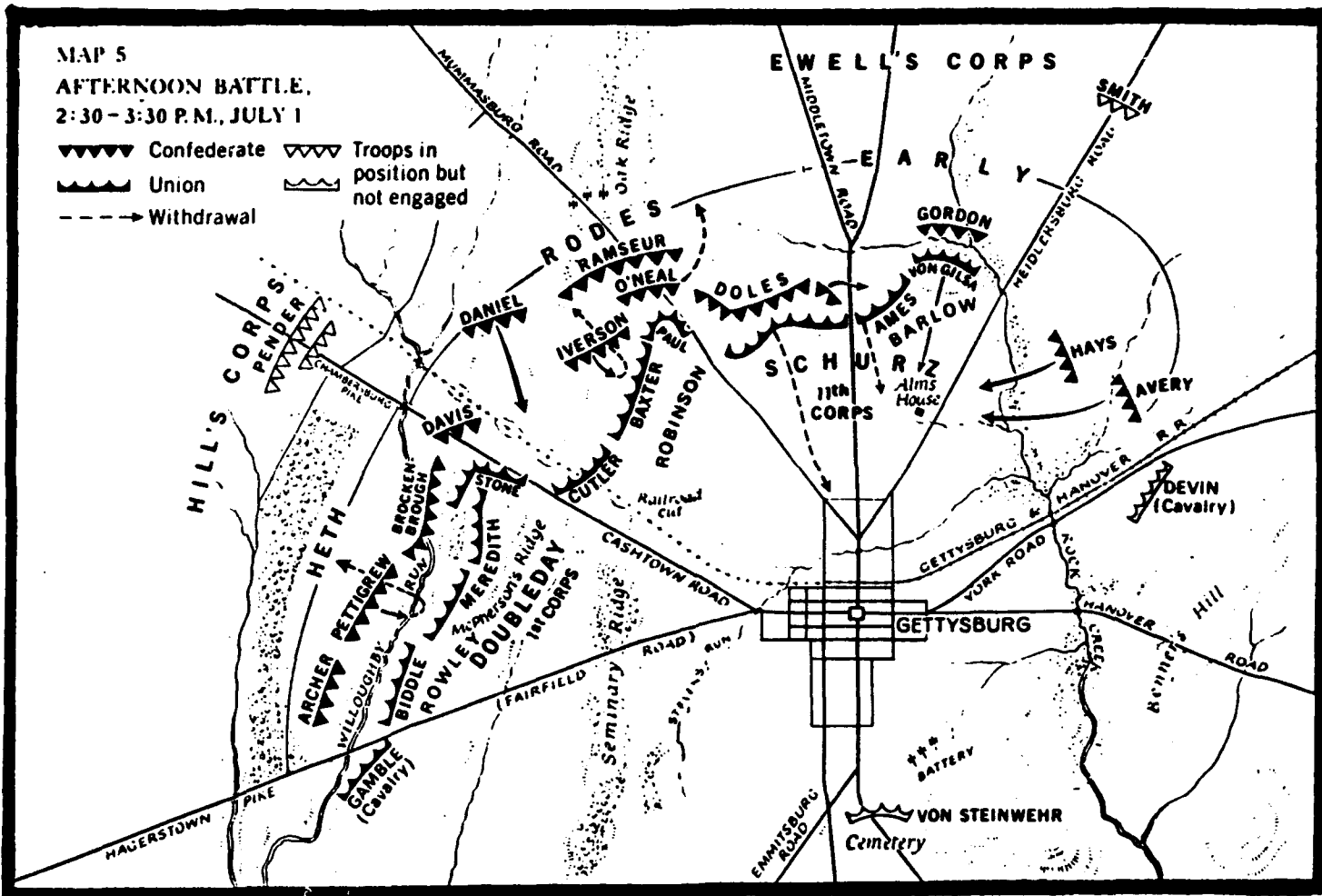
command and control not snatched defeat from the jaws of victory.

The scene now before Lee was one he himself would have scripted if possible (see map 6). The "great battle" he had predicted in his 26 June conversation with Issac Trimble had come to pass and the enemy was fleeing before him. There was, however, one small piece of work to be done. The Yankees were running right enough, but where they were stopping gave Lee cause for concern. Just southeast of the town lay a small but prominent hill upon which rested the Gettysburg cemetery, and this seemed to be the destination of the fleeing soldiers. Even as Lee looked on he could see General Winfield Scott Hancock's officers on the hill frantically organizing the rabble into a defensive position which was beginning to stretch to the east and south along the high ground. This high ground, Lee knew, must be taken, and the sooner the better.¹⁰⁴

Lee rode over to Hill, who by now had managed to come up, and directed his attention to the high ground across the valley. Both agreed it should be taken straight away. Lee then committed the first of his command and control blunders of the day. Instead of ordering Hill to immediately proceed with the capture of the high ground, a task Hill should have been about on his own, Lee asked him if he thought his men might move across the shallow valley and seize the hills only a half-mile distant.¹⁰⁵ Hill, still so "ill" he could hardly sit his

MAP 5
AFTERNOON BATTLE,
2:30 - 3:30 P.M., JULY 1

▼▼▼ Confederate ▤▤▤ Troops in position but not engaged
 ——— Union ~~~~~
 - - - - - Withdrawal



horse, replied that he thought his men were too "...exhausted ...and disordered" to take on the new mission.¹⁰⁶ While it was true that two of Hill's Divisions had seen heavy fighting that day, a third had seen almost no fighting at all and could have pushed on as part of an attack on the heights. Lee had seen the climax of the day's battle and knew, probably as well as Hill, which of the Third Corps formations could still have assaulted the high ground. Lee, however, did not press the point, and allowed Hill to begin the recall and consolidation of his men.

Lee then turned to the other Corps on the field, Ewell's Second Corps, for help. The time was now about 1600 hours. Lee sent a staff member with a message directing Ewell to seize Cemetery Hill. Had the message stated only that, Ewell probably would have attacked and the hill probably would have been taken. But the message did not stop there. Lee, writing again as if to Jackson, told Ewell that he was "...to carry the hill occupied by the enemy, if he found it practicable, but to avoid a general engagement until the arrival of the other corps of the Army, which were ordered to hasten forward" (emphasis added).¹⁰⁷

What Lee had in mind as he wrote this masterpiece of mixed intent one can only guess. Did he wish the hill carried? Those near him that day state that he assigned high importance to the taking of the high ground, but the message

to Ewell does not place this as Ewell's most important mission. Ewell's first priority, as we read in the message, was to avoid a "general engagement." What Lee meant by a "general engagement" is a complete mystery. Two Union and two Confederate Corps had been locked in fierce combat all day. Thousands of men lay dead, wounded or were prisoners of the other side. Hill's Third Corps alone counted 2,300 Yankee prisoners that evening.¹⁰⁸ What would Lee have classified this, if not a "general engagement?" Avoidance of such a battle may have been his intent at dawn on 1 July, but by sunset that battle had been fought, and nothing would undo what had been done. The great victory Lee sought was literally only a few yards and one more engagement away, but it would not be fought.

Even before the message from Lee arrived at Ewell's headquarters his commanders and staff had been pleading with him to take not only Cemetery Hill but its neighbor, Culp's Hill, another dominating terrain feature from which the developing Union line could be enfiladed.¹⁰⁹ Ewell had, however, demurred, stating that Lee had "...told me to come to Gettysburg and gave me no orders to go any further."¹¹⁰ Ewell, not surprisingly, was conducting the affairs of his Corps as if he still answered to Jackson. Lee, totally misreading the command relationship required with a subordinate like Ewell, continued to command him as if he were Jackson. As darkness

fell on 1 July, Lee and his subordinates sat and waited for the other to do something--and the last chance for a decisive Confederate victory on the field of Gettysburg ebbed away.

Later that night Lee, concerned because there had been no attack by Ewell's Corps, made the ride around to Ewell's position on the far left flank to discuss the future of the battle. Again, he was completely discretionary in his instructions to Ewell, whom he found to be so befuddled by events that he was completely incapable of making decisions. It now appeared as if he had been struck dumb as well, for Jubal Early, commander of Ewell's First Division did all the talking for the Corps. Could Ewell attack at daylight the following day to seize the high ground to his front? Early answered that they could not. Ewell nodded his agreement. Lee then offered his second option. If the Corps could not attack where it was, Lee would bring it around to the Confederate right flank, thus shortening his line and easing his command and control burden. Again Ewell sat silent as Early explained that this also was a bad idea as it would force them to leave their wounded behind and relinquish gains hard won during the day's fighting. Surely sensing this was leading nowhere, Lee then asked what the best course of action for their Corps might be in the coming fight. Remain in place, Early answered, offering help if possible as the situation developed.¹¹¹ Ewell nodded. On this low note, the bizarre meeting ended.

It was now almost midnight on 1 July. Lee, making the long ride back to his headquarters must have been terribly puzzled, if not stunned by the strange behavior of his subordinates. Was this not the Second Corps, the fiercesome host so recently led by the great Jackson himself? At some point during that ride, Lee again became the decisive leader of old as he realized what he must do. He knew that the commander of the Second Corps was a broken man and that this represented a crisis in command for the entire Army. He knew too that Ewell must be closely supervised if his Corps was to contribute at all to the coming battle. But he could not closely supervise the Corps if Ewell was far out on the left flank of the Army. Dismounting at his headquarters he sent orders to Ewell stating that if his Corps could not participate in an attack on the morrow, it was to be moved around to the right flank of the Confederate line. In this decision Lee was absolutely correct, but this flash of decisive action was short-lived. Upon receiving Lee's pointed message, Ewell rode to headquarters to plead his case for remaining in his current positions. Citing the results of a "new" reconnaissance, Ewell conceded that a "demonstration" could be made against Culp's hill in the morning. If the results of the action were "promising," the demonstration could be developed into a full-scale attack.¹¹² Who would make this decision? Why, Ewell, of course. Lee agreed.

And so the first day of the battle of Gettysburg ended. Lee's balky and ineffective system of command and control had ensured that chances for a Confederate victory ended with the day. The killing would go on for two more days, but without dramatic changes in Lee's grasp of events and his command relationship with his subordinates, the end result would not change.

THE SECOND DAY

If Lee ended the first day of the Battle of Gettysburg attempting to solve new problems with untried leaders, he began the second day deep in debate over an old issue with his one trusted subordinate. The origins of the Lee/Longstreet debate, now one of the famous "might-have-beens" of the War could be traced back to the Spring before Lee ever took his Army north. The debate centered around how best to employ the Army in the defeat of Meade's host. Longstreet believed the best tactics to employ when facing the numerically superior Union Army consisted of a combination of offensive and defensive actions. The Army would be offensive in its invasion of the North, but having invaded, it would be defensive in that it would seek out good, defensible terrain and await attack by Federal forces. Longstreet sought to create, in other words, a series of Fredericksburgs upon which the Yankee masses would dash themselves to pieces. The Rebels would

then be free to continue to move on Northern cities at their will.¹¹³

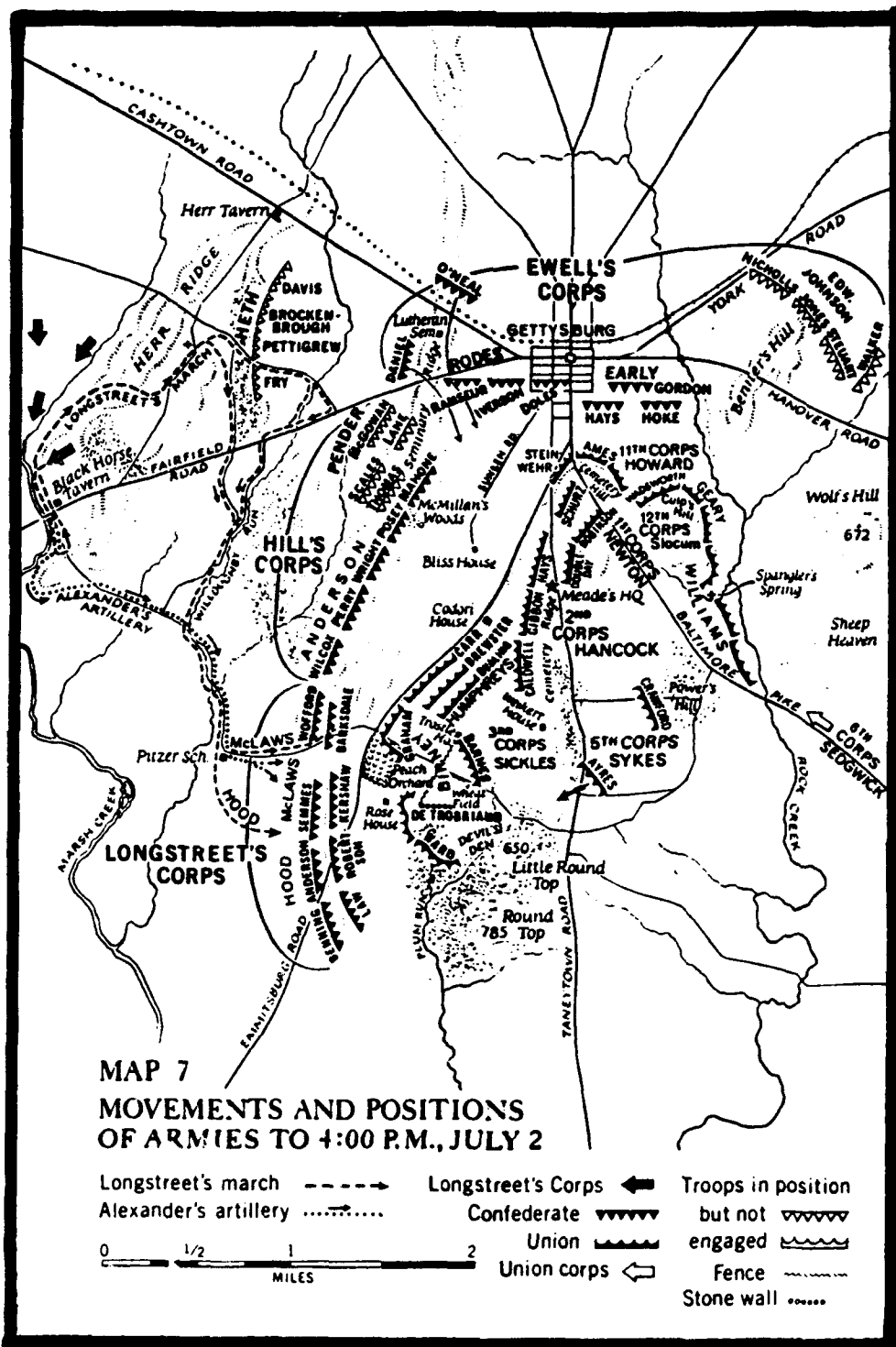
When Longstreet arrived on the field at Gettysburg around 1600 hours on 1 July, he surveyed the dispositions and recommended to Lee that he pass the Confederate Army around to the right of the Yankee line rather than attack Meade's positions head-on. Longstreet stated he expected Lee to accept this suggestion readily as the two men had discussed it before leaving Virginia. Lee later wrote that he could recall no such pre-invasion conference with Longstreet, and he flatly rejected "Old Peter's" suggestion.¹¹⁴ "If he is there tomorrow, I will attack him," said Lee. Longstreet, dejected and surely confused at Lee's determination to assault prepared positions obviously growing stronger by the minute, departed the field to hurry his Corps forward for whatever the morrow might hold.

What tomorrow "held" for Longstreet's First Corps was the conduct of the Army's main attack for that day, 2 July. Lee had correctly ascertained that he could not depend on either Ewell or Hill for decisive action on 2 July, so he decided to assign a "dawn" attack of the enemy's left flank to the First Corps. The problem was, he told none of this to Longstreet, so that at the time many on the battlefield expected the First Corps to be commencing an attack from the Rebel right flank, Longstreet's men were still marching toward Gettysburg.¹¹⁵ Not

surprisingly, Ewell, employing the discretion allowed him by Lee's orders of the night before, did nothing on the morning of 2 July.

This inactivity allowed Meade another eighteen hours to mass his forces and prepare his defenses. Lee, for his part, consulted with his commanders regarding the best course of action he should follow for the day's attack. Hill and Ewell both continued to cling to their contention that they could best be used in a supporting or exploitation role. Longstreet again attempted to convince Lee to move around the Union left flank. All this discussion was, in truth, for naught, for Lee had already decided upon his plan for the day. The main attack would be made from the Confederate right by the First Corps. The Third Corps would assault the Union center following the First Corps attack. The Second Corps would launch a supporting attack on the Federal left flank once the main attack began (see map 7).

Both Lee and Longstreet rose early on the morning of the second. Longstreet remembered that the stars were still out when he met with Lee on Seminary Ridge. What must have been on Lee's mind? The great victory of the 1st which had seen thirteen Union brigades smashed? Or the terribly disconcerting episodes with his two new corps commanders who had suddenly gone suddenly passive when faced with their added responsibilities? Lee, now 56 years old and feeling his age



after a hard year of campaigning, must have been fatigued on that morning. He had gotten only four hours sleep the night before and to add to his physical discomfort, he had begun to feel the effects of a serious case of diarrhea, the probable result of eating fresh raspberries while on the march up to Pennsylvania.¹¹⁶ But, now he was back with Longstreet, his familiar "Old War Horse," in whom he had complete confidence and whom he liked personally. Things would surely be easier now.

But, it was not to be. Longstreet, absolutely convinced that only catastrophe awaited a frontal attack against the Union positions, renewed his proposal for a move to the Federal right flank. Lee, angered as well as adamant, flatly refused to discuss the option and instead began to give specific attack orders to one of Longstreet's subordinates.¹¹⁷ The command climate was so strained that any officers who could do so moved away. While the debate continued, brigade after brigade of Union infantry occupied the line on Cemetery Ridge, pushing it ever southward.¹¹⁸

Lee's intent in his plan of attack for 2 July was, not surprisingly, imprecise and open for interpretation by those charged with its execution. It called for a synchronized attack across the entire front of the Confederate line--a front which now stretched almost seven miles! This attack was not to be made in unison under a single commander, but in

echelon from right to left, one brigade at a time, rolling up the Federal position from south to north. The attack could not commence before late afternoon as it called for Longstreet to reposition his entire corps to the south opposite the Round Tops. Once begun, the assault was to roll, by brigade, through Longstreet's Corps and into Hill's. Ewell, for his part, was to make supporting attacks on Cemetery and Culp's Hills on the extreme left flank of the Confederate line.

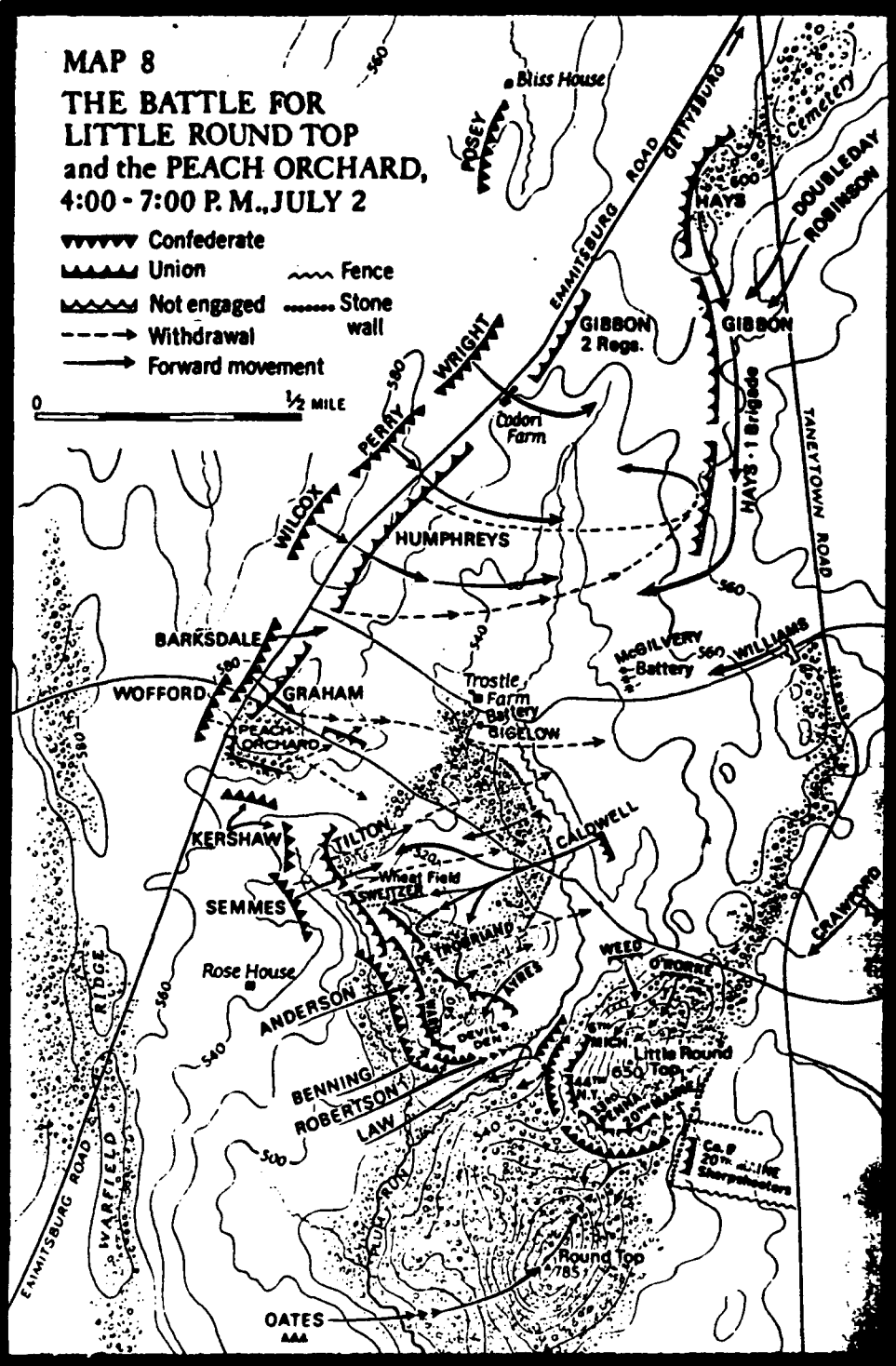
For such a plan to work close supervision and decisive command would be imperative. If the attack faltered at any point in the line, Meade would be able to shift forces quickly from his shorter line to bolster weak areas. Just before the attack began at 1600 hours, Lee positioned himself at the center of the Confederate line with Hill's Corps--a perfect location from which to observe and control the assault.¹¹⁹

The attack which began around 1600 was to involve quite probably the heaviest single day of fighting ever experienced by American soldiers. The brigades of Hood's Division led off on the Confederate right flank and the attack rolled, brigade by brigade through Longstreet's Corps (see map 8). All along the line the Federals, at high cost, were beaten back through small plots of blood-soaked ground that are now part of legend: The Peach Orchard, The Wheatfield, Devil's Den, Bloody Run, and the Slaughter Pen. Back against the frowning crests of the Round Tops, the gray-clad Rebels pushed their

MAP 8
THE BATTLE FOR
LITTLE ROUND TOP
and the PEACH ORCHARD,
4:00 - 7:00 P.M., JULY 2

- ▄▄▄▄▄ Confederate
- ▄▄▄▄▄ Union
- ▄▄▄▄▄ Not engaged
- - - - - Withdrawal
- Forward movement
- ~~~~~ Fence
- Stone wall

0 1/2 MILE



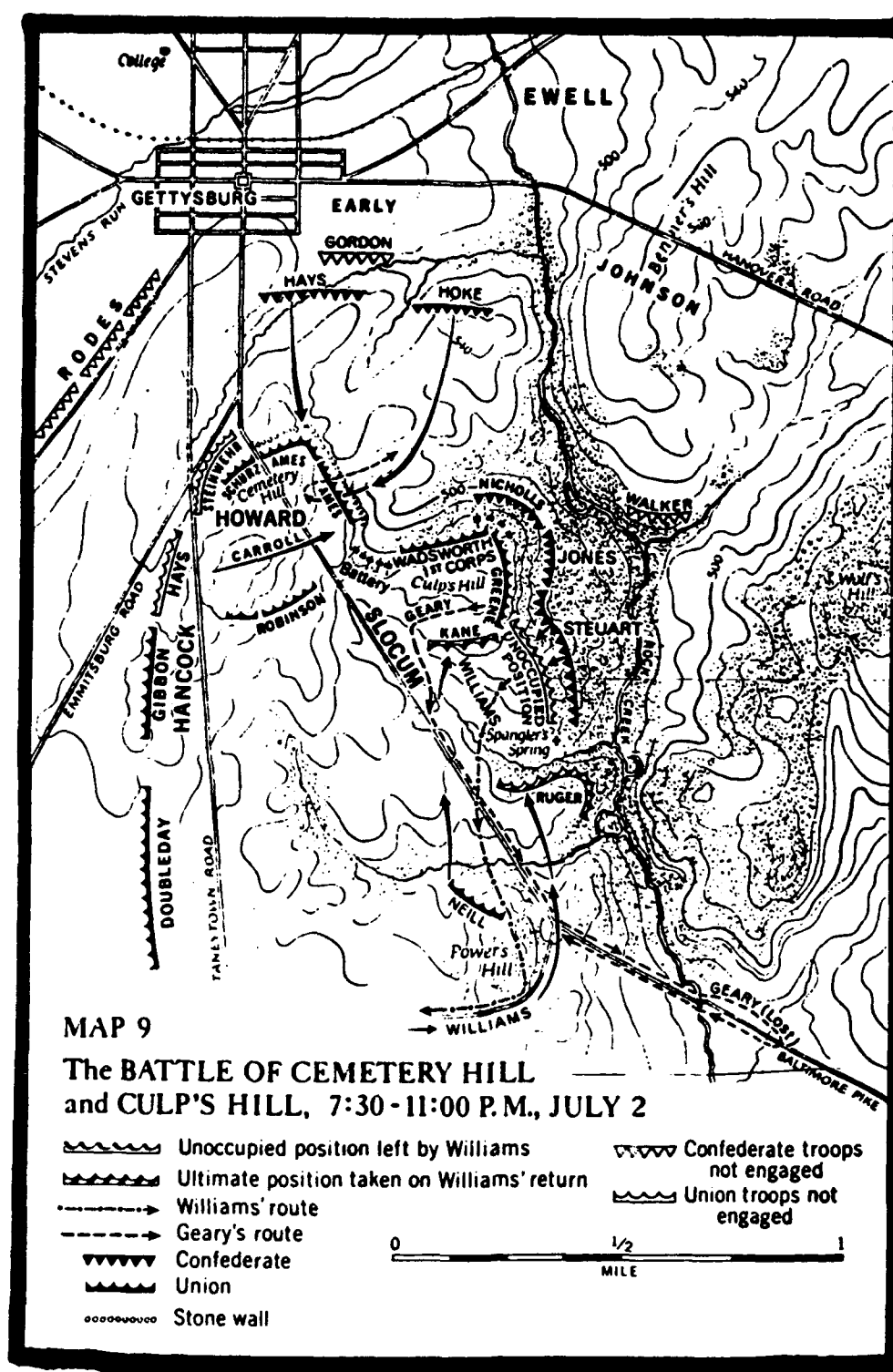
determined opponents in savage fighting. Brigade after Confederate brigade was thrown into the attack forcing Meade to desperately draw forces from his right to hurriedly shore up his left flank in a race against disaster. And then, it stopped. With Confederate soldiers standing victorious from the base of Little Round Top to the very center of the Union line on Cemetery Ridge, the attack slowed and stalled.¹²⁰

The problem occurred in "Dick" Anderson's Division of Hill's Corps. Again interpreting Lee's discretionary orders as rendering the attack decision optional, James Lane decided the price was too high and held his brigade back. The disjointed attack began to break down, but there was still hope. From his position Lee could see the assault falter and could easily have influenced his subordinates to continue the attack. He could have dispatched a staff officer with specific instructions or ridden to the spot personally. Any word from him, in any form, would certainly have remedied the problem and ensured that the attack continued. But as disaster slowly engulfed his Army, its commander sat immobile and inactive. Throughout this entire day, as the fortunes of his Army swirled around him, Lee sent only one message. "The whole affair was disjointed," a member of Lee's staff admitted later, and Lafayette McLaws, a Division Commander in the First Corps, stated that Lee's plan depended on energetic action which did not occur in Hill's Corps and in a clear

understanding of the commander's intent which none of his subordinates possessed.¹²¹

On the far left of the Confederate line Ewell continued to be Ewell. Although he had agreed to attack in conjunction with Longstreet and thereby hold the Federals in place, he waited until almost 1800 before ordering his forces against Culp's and Cemetery Hills (see map 9). Early threw two brigades against the Federal lines on Cemetery Hill, weakened now because Meade had drawn soldiers from the hill to reinforce his left flank which was being severely tested by Longstreet's attack. Early's men advanced rapidly in furious fighting and gained the Union trenches at the crest. Once again victory lay easily within the grasp of Lee's forces, but once again it would be snatched away by poor command and control. Early's men arrived at the crest of the hill battered, exhausted and, most importantly, nearly out of ammunition. The gray infantry dug in as best they could, redistributed their ammunition, and waited for the reinforcements they knew would come.¹²²

But they did not come. What arrived, instead, were the previous owners of the trenches the Rebels now occupied, and they meant to have them back. Volley after volley of musketry swept the Confederate position, a horrible fire fearfully augmented by canister from newly-positioned Federal batteries. Early's commanders sent frantic requests for support to their



chief, but the supporting attack, due to come in on the Confederate's right from Rodes' Division, had been stillborn in a lack of coordination between the Second and Third Corps. Five thousand fresh Confederate infantry sat at the bottom of the hill and waited as their comrades were assaulted and killed, or driven from the heights.¹²³

Neither Ewell nor Hill had seen fit to ensure the attack was coordinated. Both had interpreted the intent of Lee's discretionary orders as granting to them the final decision as to whether the attacks should be pressed. So it passed that as Early's Brigades stood atop Cemetery Ridge on the flank and rear of the entire Union line, a scant 200 meters from Meade's headquarters, the two Corps Commanders were deciding to terminate the attacks.

Even more astounding is Lee's lack of command activity throughout the day. As stated earlier, he sent only one message and received only one from the field. Lee was a keen judge of leaders and surely he knew by this time that Hill and certainly Ewell bore close supervision and precise, directive orders. Both of the Corps Commanders had been perfect models of indecision and inactivity throughout the two days of the battle and had amply demonstrated that they could not be trusted to correctly interpret the intent in Lee's orders. The prudent commander would have modified his command style in his dealings with these two flawed subordinates, and, either

through personal supervision or staff reporting, been far more attentive to the actions (or lack thereof) of the new commanders.

But Lee did neither. He continued to issue mission-type discretionary orders of vague intent which his subordinates continued to misinterpret, and he remained content to let Ewell flounder, miles away over on the left flank.

Lee's conduct as a commander on 2 July may have been influenced by his physical and mental health. As stated earlier he was suffering from an acute case of diarrhea, probably brought on by eating raw fruit. But possibly of more importance was his mental state. He had been put woefully off balance by the absence of Stuart, so much so that he asked nearly every officer he saw, "Can you tell me where General Stuart is?" or "Where on earth is my cavalry?"¹²⁴ But, added to this even the most casual observers noted something different, something they had not seen in Lee before. His legendary self-control seemed to be breaking down. Probably the most objective report was rendered by the Prussian Army observer in Lee's camp, Major Justus Sheibert. Sheibert had seen Lee in action at Chancellorsville and he was struck by the difference in demeanor Lee now exhibited. At Chancellorsville Lee had been calm and assured, but he seemed to Sheibert now to be edgy, nervous and uncertain. This

change, said Scheibert, seemed also to have an effect on the officers who came in contact with Lee.¹²⁵

Lee spent the night of 2 July alone, a remarkable fact considering all that had gone wrong that day. Much might have been gained by a conference with his Corps Commanders. He could have reviewed the day's actions and assigned specific missions for the morning.¹²⁶ This, in fact, is exactly what Lee's opposite number was doing the evening of 2 July. Meade, wishing to be absolutely sure all his commanders understood the plans for the coming day, gathered his commanders and staff at his headquarters in the Widow Leister's small white frame house, set back only 100 meters from his front lines. Here Meade told John Gibbon of Hancock's Second Corps that he expected Lee to attack the center of the Union line on 3 July, and that meant the brunt of the attack would fall on Gibbon. He was, of course, exactly correct in his prediction and each commander departed the meeting knowing exactly what was expected of him on the morrow.¹²⁷ Lee's assessment of Meade was proving correct. He would make no mistakes. Lee chose not to meet with his commanders or to attempt an assessment of the day's problems. He instead chose to simply send messages to both Ewell and Longstreet, directing them only to renew their attacks the next morning.¹²⁸

THE THIRD DAY

As Lee saw it, his reasons for deciding to assault the center of the Union line were sound. First, he had severely battered the Federal defenders in the previous two days of fighting, making substantial gains on both ends of Meade's line. Second, he had available rested troops from Hill's Corps at the center of his own line to which he could now add George Pickett's entire division, newly arrived from Chambersburg to join Longstreet's Corps. Further, Stuart, the knight errant, had returned and could be used to strike the rear of the Yankee line as the Confederate infantry struck the front. Finally there was Lee's overriding confidence in his soldiers--a belief as yet unshaken, that the skinny, threadbare riflemen of his formations, driving on an objective, could not be denied. It was a belief which the grim fighting of the past two days had only served to strengthen.¹²⁹

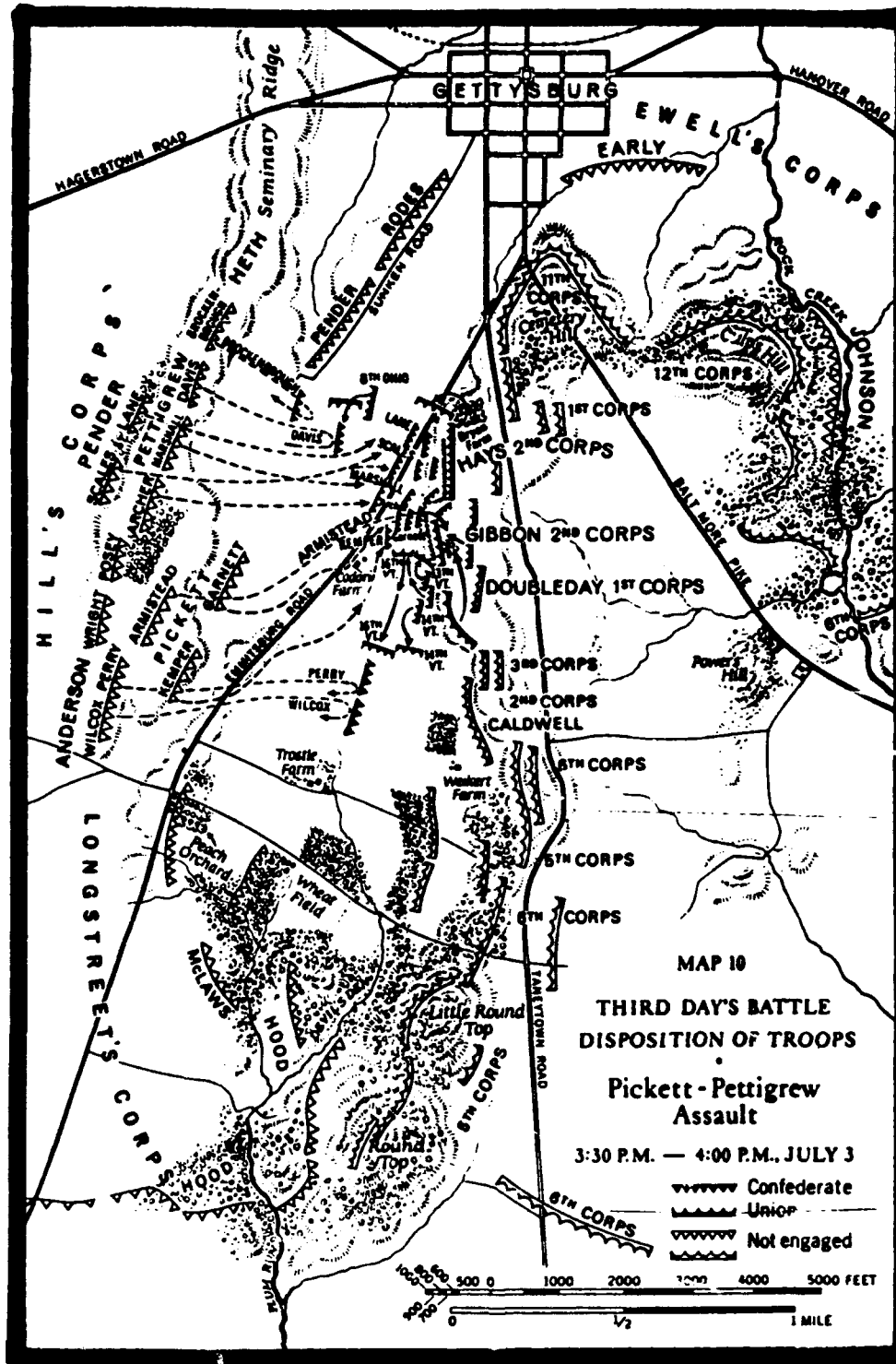
Lee's plan for 3 July was devastatingly simple. In concert with the finest teachings of Jomini, he had struck at the enemy's left and right and would now deliver the coup de grace at his center. Longstreet attempted one last time to dissuade Lee in favor of slipping the Army to the right, but Lee was now adamant. "The enemy is there," he said, pointing to the center of the Union line, "and I am going to strike

him." Longstreet felt the greatest depression of his life overwhelm him. He recognized in Lee's voice that tone which signaled that all discussion was at an end.¹³⁰

Lee might have been impatient with Longstreet's doggedness, but he still had no doubt where to turn when there was serious work to be done. Although only three of the eleven brigades designated to make the assault were from the First Corps, he gave command of the assault to his "Old War Horse."¹³¹

The objective of the attack was to be a "copse of trees" known locally as Ziegler's Grove, lying roughly at the center of the Union line almost a mile away across an open field. The eleven brigades would advance abreast (see map 10) supported by the fire of 140 guns, the largest concentration of artillery ever assembled for a single engagement on this continent. The brigades would go in after the artillery had done its best work. The decision to initiate would be Longstreet's.¹³²

Ewell's role in the attack was to again be one of support. He still had a portion of Johnson's division in position on Culp's Hill and this force was to have attacked at dawn. Unfortunately, as was the case in the well-known fable, "the bear blew first," and Johnson was swept off the hill before Longstreet's attack ever began. Ewell's final chance



to actively participate in a coordinated attack ended as had all others before it, in dismal failure.

Although Lee had decided to use a mix of brigades from two of his corps for his attack, he chose not to become involved in the coordination of the two forces for the assault. Again, his action here defies explanation for two very important reasons. First, the attack, while appearing a simple assault on line, was in fact a complicated maneuver to coordinate. The attacking force would stretch for more than a mile from end to end and its movement would have to be finely synchronized if the flanks of the formation were to be covered. As this synchronization would have to be effected between the commanders and forces of two corps, custom and military logic demanded it be administered or at least overseen by the next higher commander and his staff. Such would not, however, be the case this day. Lee divested himself of all responsibility for the coordination between his two commanders, delegating the entire responsibility to Longstreet and Hill to draw on forces as required.¹³³

Again, Lee's line of reasoning in this is nothing short of amazing, given the personal relationship between Longstreet and Hill. A.P. Hill had not gotten along with any of his superiors, least of all Longstreet, who no doubt clearly recalled the circumstances which led to his challenge of Hill to a duel. The chance of effective coordination occurring

between these two was exceptionally poor, and all this Lee knew. It seemed, however, that Lee was determined to operate on this 3rd of July as he had operated on that 3rd of May so recently past, yet now so distant. On that morning in the deep woods of Chancellorsville he had turned the operation over to Jackson, passing to him the responsibility for all tactical details. He did so now with Longstreet, his subordinate most opposed to the plan. Having done so, Lee rode back through the woods of Seminary Ridge to his command post to spend yet another day waiting and watching.¹³⁴

Longstreet spent the remainder of the morning organizing the infantry and artillery for the assault. Hill, satisfied that the responsibility for his soldiers taking part had now been transferred to Longstreet, made no effort to assist Longstreet or to see to the needs of his own soldiers. Nor did Longstreet receive help from any of Lee's staff, a fact which in one instance would prove critical. Lee's Chief of Artillery, General William Pendleton, knew that the artillery ammunition was running dangerously low--too low to support a prolonged bombardment. As Lee had not conferred with his staff concerning the feasibility of the plan of attack, he did not know of the shortage and had based the success of his entire plan on a sustained bombardment. Pendleton, a routinely poor performer whom Lee should have dismissed a year earlier, said nothing.¹³⁵

At 1307 hours the cannonade opened. The Federal response at first was slow, but soon battery after battery came into action until finally both Seminary and Cemetery ridges seemed to be a solid sheet of flame. Smoke soon covered the entire field and the stench from the cordite was so strong it made men one-half mile away cover their mouths and noses with kerchiefs as their eyes watered.¹³⁶

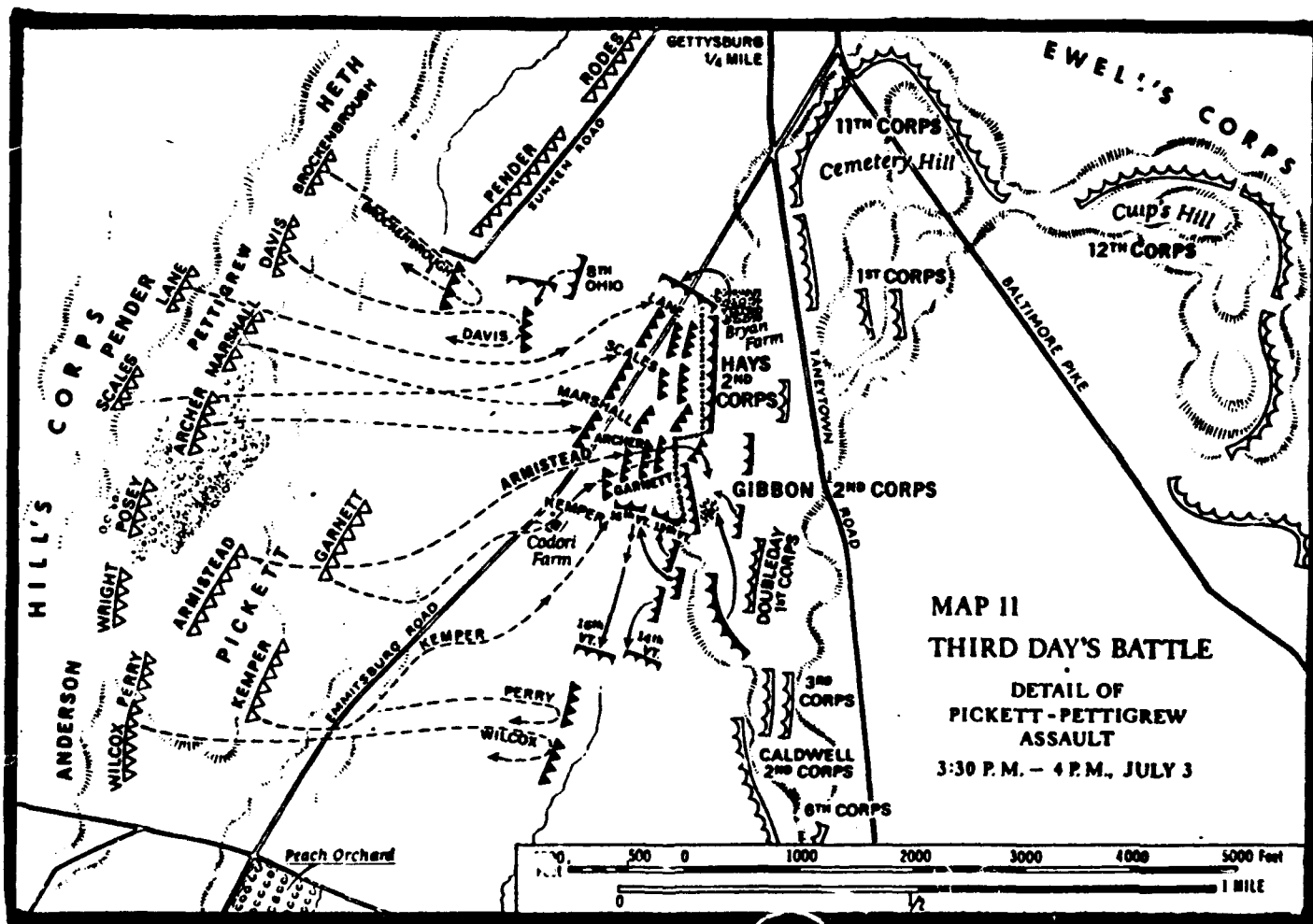
Longstreet rode from his right flank to the center of the ridge where Pickett's men waited in the woods, fighting the heat and their own fears. Every soldier knew what he would soon be asked to do and, as these men were veterans, they knew full well their chances of survival.

At 1430 hours the battery fire reached a crescendo, and Porter Alexander, Longstreet's chief of artillery, sent word to Pickett that "If you are to come at all, you must come at once or we will not be able to support you as we ought." Pickett, glad to be released from the tension of waiting, rode quickly over to Longstreet, whom he found leaning against a split-rail fence, staring out at the smoke-shrouded field. Here occurred one of the saddest, most poignant moments of the war as Pickett confronted his commander. "General," he asked with the boyish eagerness that had endeared him to everyone he met, "shall I advance?" Longstreet, still staring at the field, seemed not to hear. "My feelings so overcame me that I could not speak for fear of betraying my want of confidence,"

he explained later. In answer, Longstreet could only drop his head to his chest. That was enough for the fiery Pickett, who, remounting his horse, replied, "I am going to move forward, Sir." He saluted, turned and rode away, leaving Longstreet alone with his dread, staring at the ground.¹³⁷

At first nothing happened. Then the murmuring and stirrings of a huge body of armed men could be heard in the woods as the formations began to move forward. When they broke out into the bright sunlight of the field, it was a sight both sides agreed took the breath away. Orders had been given - "Advance slow, arms at will. No cheering, no firing, no break in step. Dress on the center."¹³⁸ Slowly the full expanse of the long, gray line came into the open until the formation stretched for over a mile from end to end. Forty-two Confederate regiments comprising over 11,000 men moved forward, regimental flags snapping in the hot summer wind (see map 11). Across the way Winfield Scott Hancock waited with his Second U.S. Corps at the center of the Federal line. At his side stood John Gibbon, witness now to the dreadful accuracy of Meade's prediction of the night before.

Longstreet, watching the last of Pickett's men move by, was startled when he saw his artillery begin to cease fire and withdraw, but he was absolutely stunned when told by Alexander that his limbers were empty. How could Pickett's men be expected to advance without artillery support? Had not Lee's



entire plan been based on massive artillery fires? Turning to Alexander, he cried, "Go and stop Pickett right where he is and replenish your ammunition." Alexander replied that replenishment would take an hour or more and such a delay would cost the loss of any advantage gained by the Confederate bombardment. Longstreet knew his artillerist was correct in his assessment. For better or for worse, the assault was on.¹³⁹

On the gray line moved, at about one hundred yards per minute. The Yankee gunners, brave men themselves, quickly turned from the unforgettable spectacle of an advancing wall of glinting bayonets and set about the business of killing as many Rebels as they could. Raked by shell, grape and cannister, the long lines began to show great gaps but on they came. Only when they neared the crest of the ridge did they pause, fire one volley, and break into a run as they assaulted. Urged forward by their commanders, the Confederate infantry pierced the Union line at numerous points, but for all their bravery, the final outcome of the attack was never in doubt. Lacking reinforcements and supporting artillery fire, the small pockets of gray were overwhelmed one by one, in a sea of blue until they were no more.¹⁴⁰

The great charge was over. As the men returned, still under Federal artillery fire from the hill, Lee rode out to meet them. One of the first men he met was George Pickett,

returning in bewilderment after seeing two-thirds of his Division swept away. Lee, expecting a counterattack, directed Pickett to ready his Division to receive it. Tearfully, Pickett replied, "General Lee, I have no division now." Lee, for his part, spoke gently to the returning soldiers, many of whom had suffered terrible wounds and were now carried by their comrades. "The blame is mine," he said, "You have done all men can do. It is all my fault." 141

VI: CONCLUSIONS

Lee's acceptance of all the blame for the Confederate defeat at Gettysburg certainly goes too far. Robert E. Lee was, indeed, a "great captain" before the battle and would become so again. His place as one of the premier soldiers ever produced by this nation is well deserved and secure. But the fact of Gettysburg remains. An investigation of the events of that July may follow two courses. First, we may join the seemingly endless line of pseudo-military "analysts" who, seizing upon this "fact" or that, seek only to promote the sensational for material gain. Their tripe may be seen stacked in the bookstores of malls across the land. This path, of course, leads not to truth but to yet another lucrative perversion of the facts, and does not merit the serious scholarship of the military professional. We must

follow a different path, one in which mistakes and shortcomings of leaders are seen not as an end, but as means by which we may become more professional still.

While there are numerous specific instances of an action or inaction which may have contributed to the Confederate defeat, the overarching reason Lee was beaten in Pennsylvania is because his system of command and control was seriously flawed. Much worse, these flaws were systemic, and thereby affected every action of the army.

In summary, the most critical of these flaws are listed below:

Lee failed to evaluate and adjust the command relationships within the Army following the major reorganization of June 1863. The command relationship which exists between a leader and his subordinates is not static in nature. It is, rather, a dynamic relationship requiring constant re-evaluation as commanders within an organization are added or replaced. The Army of Northern Virginia underwent its most comprehensive reorganization of the war only days before the Gettysburg campaign was initiated. Every major formation was affected and Lee found himself with nearly a score of commanders new to their positions. Key among these were the commanders of two of his three corps, A.P. Hill and Richard Ewell.

Both these officers had performed acceptably as division commanders, but there were indicators in both their pasts which should have merited Lee's close attention. Richard Ewell had served under Jackson, a man not given to developing subordinates for higher responsibility. Jackson was concerned with the here-and-now, with killing all the Yankees he could in the shortest amount of time required, and he told his subordinates only what they had to know about his plans for doing this. Further, questions should have been raised by the very serious wound Ewell received at Groveton. The Ewell Lee thought he placed in command of the Second Corps was not the "whole Ewell" of 1862. The Ewell he actually got was a much diminished shadow of that man. Lee should have seen early on (and certainly not later than the first day of Gettysburg) that Ewell would require close supervision and extremely directive orders. Undoubtedly, he did see the problems developing, but he took no action to correct them. Instead Lee left Ewell in a virtual independent command throughout the battle, miles away in both distance and intent, and almost completely ineffective in accomplishing his designs.

The case of A.P. Hill is even more stark than that of Ewell. Hill was known throughout the Army for his uneven performance and his inability to get along with his superiors. His record was well known to Lee, but, like Ewell, he spent the three days at Gettysburg doing mostly what he wanted to do

--which mostly was nothing. After he allowed units of his Corps, in direct violation of Lee's orders and intent, to embroil the Army in a major battle, Hill became the "invisible man of Gettysburg." One searches in vain for examples of Hill in action during the battle, either commanding his Corps or assisting in the major engagements which occurred on both his flanks. He must, instead, be remembered as the commander who declined to take Cemetery Hill on the 1st, failed to support his brigades who broke the Union line on the 2d, and declined to take part in the planning and coordination of the assault of the 3d, although a major portion of his command was involved. Hill's activities, or lack thereof, cried for corrective action, but although Lee spent most of the battle in the Third Corps sector, he did nothing.

The second great failing in Lee's command system was his failure to accurately communicate his intent to his subordinates. This, coupled with his preference for mission-type discretionary orders, resulted in a series of misdirected actions and mission failures. These failures probably could have been avoided if only Lee's subordinates had understood what he considered critical to the success of the campaign.

This deadly combination of discretionary orders and imprecise communication of intent blocked Lee's efforts at every turn. This was the combination that sent Lee into

Pennsylvania without his cavalry and allowed Hill and Ewell to set their own agendas throughout the campaign.

In later years, when asked why the campaign failed, Lee answered that he could not obtain a "proper concert of action."¹⁴² True enough, but this begs the question of "why?" The answer is that he failed to accurately communicate his intent to his subordinates. This provided his subordinates with the freedom to make major decisions in the conduct of operations, but did not provide them with the guidance to do so in a manner consistent with Lee's aims.

A third major flaw in Lee's system of command and control concerns the manner in which he employed his staff. Lee's staff members could have been a tremendous force for good in a number of ways during the battle. They could, for example, have aided their chief in his exercise of command through the formulation and construction of orders. Throughout the battle one finds Lee working till after midnight and rising before dawn in an effort to ensure his orders, ineffectual as they might have been, were composed and transmitted to his commanders.

His staff also could have been of tremendous assistance in Lee's exercise of control during the battle. How different the outcome of Gettysburg might have been if Lee had placed a competent staff officer, well versed in his commander's intent, in the headquarters of Hill and Ewell. And one can

only guess how history might read if one of Lee's staff officers had discovered and reported the shortage of artillery ammunition before Pickett stepped off on 3 July.

Lee chose instead to employ his small staff much as he had been employed while a staff officer during the Mexican War. They served as messengers, copied orders he dictated, and occasionally conducted reconnaissances of routes or terrain surveys in an area of operations. As a result, Lee was chronically overworked and his commanders consistently failed to receive their commander's perspective of events.¹⁴³

Finally, a credible critique of the command and control system of the Army of Northern Virginia must examine the intent of Robert E. Lee himself. What did Lee wish to accomplish that summer of 1863? Was his intent only to move to the north in order to provision his army and demonstrate the viability of Southern arms? These were the reasons he stated to Jefferson Davis in 1863 and to interviewers following the war. But this explanation rings hollow given Lee's offensive bent and his remarks to his confidants at the time of the invasion.

This question of Lee's intent is more than simply an exercise in intellectual gymnastics. It is, rather, at the heart of the question of Lee's poor command and control, for if he was, as it seems, unsure of what he was about strategically, it follows that he would have difficulty

communicating operational intent to his subordinates. It would explain, for instance, his convoluted commands of 1 July which spanned the violence spectrum from "no general engagement" to "complete the annihilation of Meade's Army" and back to "no general engagement" again.

The fact is Lee sought decisive battle in Pennsylvania. He was supremely confident in both his abilities as a commander and in the fighting capacity of his soldiers. He himself stated "I thought my men were invincible."¹⁴⁴ As the campaign progressed, he began to experience severe problems in his ability to control events, evidenced by the absence of Stuart, the ineptitude of Hill and Ewell, and the reluctance of Longstreet. Still, Lee would attack. Southern bayonets, in the hands of solid Southern infantry would make up for whatever shortcomings might exist. The commander of the Army of Northern Virginia had begun to believe his own press reports. As Shelby Foote has written, "Gettysburg was the price the South paid for having Robert E. Lee."¹⁴⁵

These, then, are the teachings of the Chancellorsville and Gettysburg campaigns--examples in the exercise of command and control as applicable to commanders today as they were to the men who led the Army of Northern Virginia in 1863. Put in its simplest terms, the experience of that Army of our past confirms for our forces of today that without effective command and control there can be no effective exercise of

operational art, that vital link between the strategy of a nation and the employment of its forces in battle. And, as stated in our doctrine of today, "Without operational purpose and direction, war is reduced to a series of disconnected engagements, with relative attrition as the only measure of success or failure."¹⁴⁶ That statement, a perfect summary of all that went wrong at Gettysburg in 1863, could have been written by Robert E. Lee himself.

EPILOGUE

The human cost of Gettysburg is well-nigh incomprehensible in today's terms, and the cost of Longstreet's assault was especially grim. From Pickett's division only one field grade officer returned to the Southern lines. Of Pettigrew's entire division only 1,500 men returned, and only one staff officer. The Thirty-Eighth North Carolina had gone in a regiment. It could now muster only forty men and one First Lieutenant. Company A of the 11th North Carolina had come north with one hundred soldiers. Only eight remained after the charge.

Watching the remnants of his Corps return from that bloody ridge, James Longstreet turned to the British observer, Lieutenant Colonel Arthur Freemantle of the Coldstream Guards, and asked if he had anything to drink on him. Freemantle produced a silver flask of rum from which Longstreet took a long pull. Freemantle, sensing that "Old Peter" might need another drink or two before this day was done, told him to keep the flask. He did.

NOTES

- ¹ Walter Clark, editor, Histories of the Several Regiments and Battalions from North Carolina in the Great War, 1861-1865, Volume I, p. 293.
- ² Southern Historical Society Papers, Volume IV, p. 152.
- ³ Joint Chiefs of Staff Publication 1 (Washington: Office of the JCS) p. 3.
- ⁴ U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, FC 101-55, Corps and Division Command and Control (Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas: 1985) p. 3-1.
- ⁵ Headquarters, Department of the Army, FM 100-5, Operations (Washington, DC: 5 May 1986) p. i.
- ⁶ Edward B. Atkeson, "The Operational of War," Military Review, March 1987, p. 29.
- ⁷ FM 100-5, Operations, p. 21.
- ⁸ Headquarters, Department of the Army, FM 100-15, Corps Operations (Washington, DC, 13 September 1989) p. 4-0.
- ⁹ Daniel J. Hughes, "Abuses of German Military History," Military Review, December, 1986, p. 67.
- ¹⁰ Ibid., p. 68.
- ¹¹ William J. Bolt and David Jablonsky, "Tactics and the Operational Level of War," Military Review, February, 1987. p. 10.
- ¹² Headquarters, U.S. Army Infantry Center, FC 71-6, Battalion and Brigade Command and Control, (Washington, DC, 1 March 1985), p. 1-1.
- ¹³ FC 101-55, Corps and Division Command and Control, p. 1-5.
- ¹⁴ Douglas S. Freeman, "Lee as a Leader," Lecture, U.S. Army War College, 11 February, 1939, p. 142. This was, in fact, exactly his response when informed that one of his brigades was under furious cavalry assault during the battle of Mine Run in December, 1863.
- ¹⁵ Ibid., p. 143.
- ¹⁶ Louis H Manarin, "Lee in Command: Strategical and Tactical Policies" (Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 1964), p. 21.
- ¹⁷ Major General Sir Frederick Maurice, An Aide-De-Camp of Lee (Boston: Little Brown, 1927), p. xx. Throughout the war, Lee preferred to bivouac with Longstreet's 1st Corps. Even in the most arduous campaigns Longstreet's campfire always attracted the more "lively" elements of the Army. Late-night poker games and good whiskey were the rule. Although Lee never participated, he obviously enjoyed hearing and watching the younger men enjoy themselves.
- ¹⁸ Manarin, Lee in Command, p. 31. Lee's designated "chief of staff" was LTC Walter H. Taylor, an enthusiastic, but very inexperienced young officer. He was only twenty-six when the war ended! See Douglas S. Freeman, R.E. Lee, A Biography, Vol. III, (New York: Scribners, 1935) p. 428. (Hereafter referred to as "Lee".)

- 19 Freeman, Lee, Vol III p. 356. Lee was also prone to bouts of severe diarrhea, a result of the combination of exhaustion and field rations.
- 20 Shelby Foote, The Civil War: A Narrative, Vol II (New York: Random House, 1986), p. 44. In certainly one of the more ghastly scenes of a ghastly war, the final Union attack had been made over mounds of Federal dead killed in the previous five charges. The wounded clutched at the legs of those attacking, calling out to them to turn and run. When it was over, Burnside walked his line, alternately crying for "those men" and ranting that he himself would lead the next charge. There would be no "next charge."
- 21 Freeman, R.E. Lee, Vol III, p. 5.
- 22 Roy P. Basler, ed. The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln (New York, The Library of America, 1989), p. 433. Hooker, a man never bound by the limits of prudence, had stated publicly following Fredericksburg that Burnside's ineptness was closely matched by that of Lincoln, and that what America really needed in this hour of trial was a dictator. (A burden one can assume Fighting Joe was himself ready to take up.) Lincoln, always quick to separate bluster from real threat, informed Hooker that he was willing to risk a dictatorship if Hooker could provide victories!
- 23 Foote, The Civil War, Vol II, p. 131. "The arithmetic" Lincoln spoke of was pure attrition. At this point in the war, he understood, although his generals as yet did not, that the key to winning the war lay not in the occupation of Richmond or any other spot in the Confederacy--it lay in the total defeat of Lee and his Army.
- 24 War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, ser.I, vol.XXV, pt.II (Washington: 1889), p. 3. (The 128 volumes of the Official Record will hereafter be referred to as OR followed by the applicable series, volume and part.)
- 25 Edward J. Stackpole, Chancellorsville. Lee's Greatest Battle (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: The Stackpole Company, 1958), p. 95.
- 26 William D. Foulke, Life of Oliver P. Morton, Vol. I, (Indianapolis, 1899) p. 213.
- 27 Clifford Downey, Lee (Boston: Little Brown, 1965), p. 342. Stuart's troopers had not discovered the crossing until it was almost complete due to the long defensive frontage occupied by Lee's forces.
- 28 Freeman, 1939 Carlisle lecture, p. 143.
- 29 Bruce Catton, The Army of the Potomac: Glory Road (New York: Doubleday, 1952), p. 165.
- 30 Ibid., p. 167.
- 31 See Ecclesiastes 12:13.
- 32 Geoffrey C. Ward, The Civil War: An Illustrated History (New York: Random House, 1990), p. 138 and p. 174.

- 33 Frank E. Vandiver, Mighty Stonewall (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1957), p. 457. Only one task remained for the deeply religious Jackson. Just before his tent was struck he went inside, closed the flap and, as his staff waited, prayed for fifteen minutes. It was the last time he would use his tent.
- 34 Stackpole, Chancellorsville, p. 166.
- 35 Catton, Glory Road, p. 170.
- 36 Ward, The Civil War, p. 204.
- 37 Robert C. Johnson and Clarence C. Buel, eds., Battles And Leaders of the Civil War. Vol II (New York,: 1884) p. 297. (Hereafter referred to as B&L.)
- 38 Perry C. Casto, Jr. "A Study of the Leadership Displayed by Lieutenant General Thomas J. Jackson During the American Civil War," Unpublished Thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas: 1987. (Hereafter known as "A Study of Leadership.")
- 39 Timothy Donovan, Roy Flint, Authur Grant, Gerald Stadler, The American Civil War, (West Point, New York: Department of History, U.S. Military Academy, 1978), p. 207.
- 40 Freeman, Lee, Vol III, p. I.
- 41 Donovan, et. al. The American Civil War, pp. 208-209.
- 42 Casto, "A Study of Leadership," p. 97.
- 43 QR, XII, pt. 3, pp. 918-919. This is a remarkable document for two reasons. First, it is unusual that Lee would send such advice through official channels, and second, that Jackson should ignore it.
- 44 QR, XXV, pt. II, p. 764. "...press on..." wrote Lee, "...as the enemy is falling back..."
- 45 Henderson, G.F.R., Stonewall Jackson and the American Civil War, (Secaucus, New York: The Blue and Grey Press, 1987), p. 423. To say Jackson was without personal fear would be accurate, but would not fully explain his notions of the possibility of death on the battlefield. "Duty is ours," he once said, "and the consequences are God's." (See Vandiver, p. 482.) Death in battle was not only possible, but to Jackson simply the price of seeing one's duty through. "I always endeavor in battle to take care of my wounded and bury my dead," he once told an officer who dared to question the human cost of Jackson's actions. "You have heard my order," he snapped, "obey it!" See Ward, The Civil War, p. 138.
- 46 Douglas S. Freeman, Lee's Lieutenant's. Vol II. (New York: Scribners, 1943), p. 538. The challenge was whispered by Jackson to 24 year-old Alex Haskell of South Carolina. The young man cherished the memory of his personal contact with "Old Jack" all his life.
- 47 There are numerous well written and accurate accounts of this important event. Members of the staffs of both Generals were standing nearby and could hear clearly all that was said. Their accounts of the meeting agree in all substantial areas. Here I shall use primarily the accounts as presented in Freeman, Lee's Lieutenents Vol II, pp. 538-542, Foote, The

Civil War, pp. 282-286, Stackpole, Chancellorsville and Maurice, An Aide-de-Camp of General Lee.

48 See the account in Freeman, p. 540 for the contribution of Stuart and the continuing belief of Jackson that Hooker would withdraw.

49 See Stackpole's account in Chancellorsville, p. 207 and Freeman's Lee's Lieutenants, Vol II, p. 540 for vivid accounts of this portion of the conference.

50 Jackson's staff engineer and resident cartographer, Major Jedediah Hotchkiss, produced maps of legendary accuracy. These he continually updated and expanded in detail until they were works of art. Jackson's map of the Shenandoah, for example, was a Hotchkiss masterpiece over eight feet long! See Ward, The Civil War, p. 138.

51 See Foote, The Civil War, Vol II, p. 292 for a most vivid account of the initiation of the attack.

52 Henderson, Stonewall Jackson, p. 450.

53 OR, XXV, pt. I, p. 890.

54 Psalm 51:1. "Have mercy on me. O God, according to thy steadfast love."

55 OR, XXV, pt. II, p. 769. "Old Jack", ever pious, accepted the good wishes of his commander, but privately remarked to Dr. McGuire, his army physician, that Lee should have given the praise for the victory at Chancellorsville to God.

56 Ward, The Civil War, p. 210. God would, of course, take him, on 10 May 1863. The day was a Sunday, and, when told by his wife that he would not last the day, Jackson told the faithful Dr. McGuire that all was "...very good, very good. I have always desired to die on a Sunday." See Vandiver for a detailed account of Jackson's wounding and death.

57 Freeman, Lee, Vol III, p. 8.

58 OR, XXV, pt. 2, p. 793. The order had been published shortly following Jackson's death. In it, Lee mourned his loss, but closed by exhorting all soldiers to "...emulate his invincible determination to do everything in the defense of our beloved country."

59 The nickname came from Longstreet's West Point days and probably was a result of his "Dutch" heritage. The name fit the hulking Longstreet and was picked up by the soldiers of the First Corps as well. Longstreet's personality may have been lacking, but no one doubted his fighting skill or spirit, including an old friend from West Point who had married his cousin--Ulysses Grant. Longstreet had arranged the marriage when he and Grant were stationed together in Missouri. After Grant came East to oppose Lee, he always took pains to know the location of Longstreet and his Corps.

60 Glenn Tucker, High Tide at Gettysburg, (Dayton, Ohio: Morningside Press, 1983), p. 6.

61 Randolph H. McKim, "The Gettysburg Campaign," Southern Historical Society Papers, XL, p. 134.

- 62 Dowdey, Lee, p. 385. There can be no doubt that Longstreet was in deadly earnest, intended to kill Hill, and would have if Lee had not intervened.
- 63 Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, Vol II, p. 712.
- 64 Freeman, Lee, Vol III, p. 2.
- 65 QR, XXV, pt. 3, p. 868.
- 66 Dowdey, Lee, p. 357. Lee's proposal also contained an operational deception plan. He asked Davis to constitute an "Army in effigy" under Beauregard to "threaten" Washington and draw forces to the defense of the capitol. Lee assumed the plan was approved and would be implemented. He did not know until after Gettysburg that the idea had come to naught.
- 67 QR, XXV, Pt. 3, p. 887.
- 68 Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, Vol. III, (New York: Scribners, 1972), pp. 5-7.
- 69 James M. McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 649. See also QR, XXV, pt. 3, pp. 38, 40, and 46 for official reports of the fight. Of interest is the notion that if Pleasonton had launched his attack only eighteen hours earlier he would have caught Stuart in the middle of the review--and he would have had a chance of bagging the biggest prize of all, Lee himself. They had to settle for Lee's son "Rooney," who suffered a nasty leg wound while leading his brigade.
- 70 Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, Vol. III, p. 19.
- 71 Catton, Glory Road, p. 253.
- 72 QR, XXV, pt. 3, p. 913.
- 73 See Maurice, An Aide-De-Camp, p. 207 for a compelling account of Lee's uncertainty and anxiousness.
- 74 QR, XXV, pt. 3, p. 923.
- 75 Marshall, in his memoirs, is unflagging in both his defense of Lee and the orders his chief had him write for Stuart. But one can sense that Lee knew the situation was slipping beyond his control. Yet, he did nothing to regain that control. See Maurice, p. 210.
- 76 Foote, The Civil War Vol II, p. 455.
- 77 Stuart, for his part, would spend the remaining year of his life (he was killed at Yellow Tavern in 1864) trying to justify his actions as complying with, rather than acting against Lee's plan. See Maurice, An Aide-de-Camp, for a fascinating account of how Stuart tried to delay and then alter the final report of the campaign. Condemnation ranged from Longstreet's belief that "Stuart was just being Stuart," a condition facilitated by Lee's lack of strong direction, to Lee's adjutant Marshall, who believed Stuart should have been shot!
- 78 Tucker, High Tide at Gettysburg, p. 47. Lee's true "spirits" we can only guess. On the way north he had stopped by Richmond to visit his wife and confer with Davis. The President he found as meddlesome and contrary as ever and Mrs. Lee he found in rapidly failing health. He left her at the

home of friends, suffering severely and virtually helpless.
See Dowdey, Lee, p. 357.

79 OR, XXVII, pt. 3, p. 912. General Order # 72 is obviously the work of Lee himself as it so clearly bounds his concept of "gentlemanly war." Upon reading Lee's views severely restricting even the search for food and his admonition that war is not to be made on civilians, one can easily see why he found "modern warriors" like Grant and Sherman so incomprehensible.

80 OR, XXVII, pt. 3, p. 914. The date of the message to Ewell from Lee is 22 June.

81 Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants Vol. III, pp. 26-27. His soldiers constructed a crude Stars and Bars from a ripped up Union standard, renamed the local Union fortifications Fort Jackson, and ran the flag up.

82 Ibid., p. 30.

83 Before reaching Carlisle, the Corps had passed through Greenwood, Pennsylvania, where Ewell violated Lee's General Order precluding destruction of private property. Greenwood was the home of the ironworks of the arch-abolitionist Thaddeus Stevens, a man possibly more hated in the South than Lincoln himself. Ewell ordered the works burned to the ground. See Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants Vol III, p. 31.

84 Foote, The Civil War Vol II, p. 442.

85 Reid Mitchell, Civil War Soldiers (New York: Viking, 1988), pp. 150-151.

86 John B. Gordon, Reminiscences of the Civil War, (New York: Scribners, 1904), pp. 140-143. Gordon, with the literary skill of the trained lawyer, poignantly writes of his impressions of the "enemy," fellow Americans whom he both respected and admired.

87 OR, XXVII, pt. 3, p. 914.

88 Donovan, et. al., The American Civil War, p. 247.

89 Dowdey, Lee, p. 364. Meade had not been the first choice of either Lincoln or Halleck. Their first choice had been the Commander of the Union First Corps, John Reynolds, but Reynolds preferred the certainty of corps command to the revolving door of army commander. See Tucker, High Tide at Gettysburg, p. 73. Meade received congratulations from Hooker, who was very gracious under the circumstances and provided him a briefing that night on the current situation. From the now-exiled Ambrose Burnside, a man who knew first hand the enormous cost of fleeting fame, Meade received an official message of condolence! This amazing document may be seen in OR, XXVII, pt. 3, p. 410.

90 Maurice, An Aide-de-Camp, p. 218.

91 Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants Vol III, p. 35.

92 OR, XXVII, pt. 3, p. 943.

93 OR, XXVII, pt. 2, p. 444.

94 Edwin B. Coddington, The Gettysburg Campaign (New York: Scribners, 1968) p. 231.

95 This is truly one of the timeless tenets of effective command and control and is a cornerstone of the AirLand Battle requirement for "agility." See FC 71-6, Battalion and Brigade Command and Control, p. 1-2 on its validity today.

96 Maurice, An Aide-de-Camp, p. 252. This interview, conducted by one of Lee's officers in 1868, is one of the few times Lee talked about the war after it ended. It is indeed a fascinating document and offers great insight into Lee's own confusion as to his campaign objectives and intent.

97 Tucker, High Tide at Gettysburg, p. 48.

98 Foote, The Civil War Vol II, p. 465.

99 Ward, The Civil War, p. 216. This "shoeless" condition was noticed and drew comments in every Northern town through which the Confederates marched. The threadbare condition of the Army is today strikingly portrayed in the commemorative sculptures placed on the battlefield by the Southern states.

100 Foote, The Civil War, p. 465. Buford had survived years of tough campaigning in the western Indian wars and brought all his lessons learned back east with him. His men always fought dismounted when facing infantry and, as evidenced on this day, were experts at holding critical ground until reinforcements could arrive. It was Buford who saw the critical importance of the town and picked the best ground from which to defend.

101 Dowdey, Lee, pp. 367-368. Historians have postulated that Hill's many ailments were almost certainly psychosomatic in nature as they always seemed to occur at times when he was about to be overwhelmed by events.

102 Major General John Reynolds, the Commander of the First Corps, had been shot dead by a sharpshooter just after the battle began. Howard assumed command of all troops in the field until the arrival of Hancock later in the afternoon.

103 McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom, p. 654. Lee really had no choice at this point. He probably could not have stopped the fight now even if he had wished. Only the clear communication of his intent before the battle could have prevented the clash developing into a major battle.

104 Ward, The Civil War, p. 216. The sign above Evergreen Cemetery warned that "All persons found using firearms in these grounds will be prosecuted with the utmost rigor of the law." The cemetery, which bears the scars of the battle even today, would become the site also of the National Military Cemetery. From its center, Lincoln would deliver the Gettysburg Address on 19 November of that year.

105 Dowdey, Lee, p. 369.

106 Tucker, High Tide at Gettysburg, p. 186.

107 QR, XXVII, pt. 2, p. 318.

108 Tucker, High Tide at Gettysburg, p. 186.

109 Ralph Lowell Eckert, "John Brown Gordon: Soldier, Southerner, American," (Ph.D. dissertation, Louisiana State University, 1983), p. 69. Gordon's pleading was particularly intense and, according to those present, reached the bounds of

insubordination. Gordon had seen many hard fights under Jackson and knew the high cost in lives Ewell's indecisiveness would bring.

110 QR, XVII, pt. 2, p. 444.

111 Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, Vol III, p. 102.

112 Ibid., p. 103.

113 William G. Piston, "Lee's Tarnished Lieutenant: James Longstreet and His Image in American Society," (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of South Carolina, 1982), p. 239.

114 Lee was always adamant that he had not discussed this with Longstreet before Gettysburg, but Lee's aide Marshall, in his memoirs, speaks of Longstreet proposing to Lee "...a plan which he had already considered and rejected..." implying the initial discussions predated Gettysburg. See Maurice, An Aide-de-Camp, p. 232.

115 The "dawn attack" debate over what Longstreet was ordered to do and what he actually did is one of the most hotly contested issues of the whole battle and has divided whole groups of historians into "Lee" or "Longstreet" men. See Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, Vol III, pp. 108-110 for a concise discussion of the debate.

116 Tucker, High Tide at Gettysburg, p. 222. A malady not uncommon, in that day or this.

117 Grady McWhiney, "Who Whipped Whom? Confederate Defeat Reexamined," Battles Won and Lost: Essays From Civil War History, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1986), p. 281.

118 Foote, The Civil War, Vol II, p. 489.

119 Tucker, Lee and Longstreet at Gettysburg, p. 242.

120 Foote, The Civil War, Vol II, p. 513.

121 Tucker, Lee and Longstreet at Gettysburg, p. 2.

122 QR, XXVII, pt 2, pp. 446-447.

123 Freeman, Lee, Vol III, p. 102.

124 Tucker, High Tide at Gettysburg, p. 89. This report came from Heth, but it is echoed in the memoirs and diaries of many of Lee's officers. This was the first time Lee had fought without superb cavalry support, and the effect on him of Stuart's absence cannot be overstated.

125 Piston, "Lee's Tarnished Lieutenant," p. 243.

126 Tucker, Lee and Longstreet at Gettysburg, p. 241.

Following the war, McLaws, among others, stated that he expected a conference or meeting of some sort that night, given the great confusion of the day and the uncertainty of the morrow. But no call came, and he, along with his exhausted soldiers, bedded down with his weapons to get what sleep he might.

127 Catton, Glory Road, pp. 305-306. One of the great ironies of the conference is that it destroyed forever the reputation of Meade! During the meeting his chief of staff posed the question of whether the Army should remain in place, attack or withdraw to the prepared positions on Pipe Creek. This question of withdrawal was later attributed to Meade, and

interpreted as a lack of purpose and courage on his part. It was all bunk, but poor Meade would spend the remainder of his life attempting to justify his actions. He wrote Lincoln in 1864 demanding a trial by Court Martial or an Official Review, but was rebuffed by the President.

128 Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, Vol III, pp. 105-106. An account of Lee's actions this evening is also contained in OR, XXVII, pt. 2, p 477.

129 Donovan et. al., The American Civil War, p. 259.

130 Foote, The Civil War, Vol II, p. 529. "Old Peter," when informed of Lee's plan of attack, quickly added up the Southern forces available and concluded they would be insufficient to carry the ridge. "But," Longstreet said, "Lee's blood was up," and further discussion was useless.

131 Piston, Lee's Tarnished Lieutenant, p. 253. Whatever the criticisms of Longstreet's actions during the battle, his full support of Lee's plan, a plan which he truly believed was doomed to fail and was a huge waste of good men, is admirable.

132 Foote, The Civil War, Vol II, p. 530.

133 Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, Vol III, p. 147.

134 Dowdey, Lee, p. 385.

135 Ibid., p. 386. Why Lee retained Pendleton is a mystery. He was an incompetent meddler of little skill and no initiative, preferring to spend his time in various "court intrigues" among the staff. Perhaps the fact that before the war he had been an ordained minister explains the pious Lee's reluctance to sack him.

136 Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, Vol III, p. 154. The smoke, held in place that day by the thick summer air, could reportedly be seen ten miles away before a breeze later brought relief.

137 Foote, The Civil War, p. 551. This episode is one of the most poignant of the whole war. Longstreet had known the likable Pickett since their service together in the Eighth Infantry Regiment at Chapultepec. He must have known that Pickett's chances of survival, along with that of many other of his friends, were slim. Everyone who knew Pickett liked him, to include the Congressman who had secured his appointment to West Point, Abraham Lincoln!

138 OR, XXVII, pt. 2, p. 360. Prohibiting the fierce "Johnnies" from employing their terrifying yell must have been particularly bothersome to the men, but it was necessary if orders were to be heard in so large a formation.

139 Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, Vol III, p. 156.

140 Piston, "Lee's Tarnished Lieutenant," p. 257.

141 Foote, The Civil War, Vol II, p. 568. In later years Pickett would not be so kind. He never forgave Lee and would say of him, "That old man had my division slaughtered at Gettysburg." In one of the great mysteries of the War, Lee refused to accept or forward Pickett's report of the action.

It never was published and was never seen by anyone but Lee.

See Ward, The Civil War, p. 236.

142 Coddington, The Gettysburg Campaign, p. 443.

143 Tucker, High Tide At Gettysburg, p. 216.

144 Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants. Vol III, p. 166.

145 Shelby Foote, as quoted in an interview with Geoffrey Ward, The Civil War, p. 268.

146 U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, FM 100-6, Large Unit Operations, (Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, 1987), p. vii.

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